



Ministry of Commerce & Industry Annual Report 2015



Good policy for trade
Revitalizing the economy
Opening up the private sector
Work opportunities for the future



FOREWORD



Minister of Commerce and Industry

Fellow statesmen, it is with profound honor that I present to you highlights and achievements at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) during the year 2015. After nearly two years of health crisis in Liberia-Recovering from the economic impact of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and a dramatic fall in the prices of our exportable commodities (Rubber, Iron Ore and etc.) on the global market, I am however delighted to report that we made significant achievements in joining the multilateral trading system as we strengthen our domestic private sector and productive capacities to realize our full economic growth potential.

With your permission fellow statesmen, let me acknowledge that with the support of our International partners, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Head of the Executive and the National Legislature our journey was challenging yet rewarding on the overall.

Our overarching goal at the Ministry of Commerce and industry is to promote private sector development as an engine of economic growth and development. And sustain private sector growth through enhanced economic competitiveness and diversification that will create job opportunities for Liberians.

After a successful completion of negotiations on market access in three working party meetings with WTO member states in Geneva, Switzerland, Liberia membership was approved and signed on 16 December 2015 at the WTO 10th Ministerial Conference, Nairobi Kenya. Hence, a WTO post accession plan has been developed and submitted to potential donors to guide the implementation process for WTO compliant and competitiveness.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has streamlined the Import licensing requirements in line with the WTO Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures and the need to improve on our trade policy indicator under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Program. The Ministry reduced the number of product category requiring Import Permit Declaration (IPD) from seventeen (17) to eleven (11). The core products requiring IPDs are restricted to mainly consumables to protect the health of consumers.

I am pleased to report the successful hosting of the 3rd Annual MSME Conference and Trade Fair under the **Theme-Buying Liberian, Building Liberia** with focus on **Youth Innovation for Economic Empowerment**. As part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry effort to empower youth innovation, US\$10,000.00 was given to 10 startup Liberian businesses from the Ministry's Life fund while US\$10,000 was also given to additional 10 startup Liberian businesses by the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

To ensure the speedy enactment and ratification of the Intellectual Property (IP) Law, The Liberia WTO Accession Protocol and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Instruments (Conventions, Treaties and Protocols), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has submitted to the honorable House of Representatives the above-mentioned instruments and protocols.

I am deeply delighted to bring to your attention the change at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. During the year 2015, we conducted several vital standards inspections on food safety, calibration and intellectual property. We conducted calibration verification of gas station pumps, which ensured that all stations pumps were adequately calibrated.

Fellow Statesmen, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has in place a Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) that cuts across major policy areas of the Ministry. The SPIU overarching goal is to broaden the mandate of the Ministry by coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the activities of the various Ministry donor-funded projects.

I would like to end by extending special gratitude to the Chief Executive of the Republic of Liberia (Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf) for the privilege afforded me to serve the great people of Liberia; and faithfully depending on your wisdom and constructive engagements for the years that lie ahead. A special acknowledgement goes to my team, the National Legislature including our Local and international partners for the usual support.

I am confident that our inclusive growth agenda will strive for new policy development and legislative reforms that will identify ways we can use our resources to empower innovative private sector operators.

I believe that trade is the only magic bullet for economic transformation to ensure inclusive growth, economic diversification, wealth and job creation; your continuous support will ensure and facilitate an improved service delivery to the people of Liberia. Thank you and we anticipate your full cooperation for the year 2016.



Honorable Axel M. Addy
MINISTER
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

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1.0 ACRONYMS

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

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Minister's Letter to the National Legislature

Honorable Members
53rd National Legislature
Capitol Hill, Capitol Building
Republic of Liberia
Monrovia, Liberia

RE: SUBMISSION OF 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Honorable Members:

In compliance with our statutory mandate of reporting to the Liberian people, we have the honor to present our compliments and to submit to your honorable body a comprehensive report covering the period January 1 to December 31, 2015. This report is an embodiment of the progress made by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry during this period. The achievements herein mentioned are the results of the government immense support in collaboration with our International partners.

Honorable Members of the 53rd National Legislature, you will find in this report achievements made as the result of your willingness to support our rebranding agenda, challenges as a results of key sectors resource constraints, and way forwards as a signal of policy recommendations and need for support for the next fiscal year.

Fellow Statesmen, we remain grateful for the opportunity afforded us by Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to serve this great nation of ours and working to foster a competitive business environment where Liberians can be active partakers to driving inclusive economic growth, creating jobs for our people and reducing poverty through entrepreneurship and youth empowerment.

Thanks again for the opportunity given to serve our people, we look forward to your usual support during the years that lie ahead. With assurances of my usual highest esteem, I remain.

Yours sincerely,



Axel M. Addy
MINISTER

2.2 Legal Mandate

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

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

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

Chapter 21. MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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

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

- (a) Establish and regulate commodity and trade standards;
- (b) Collect, evaluate, and publish data pertaining to commerce, and industry
- (c) Establish and enforce standards of business practice;
- (d) Promote sound and development of foreign and domestic commerce;
- (e) Develop plans for the movements of goods and people within and without the Republic;

- (f) Perform such other function as may be assigned from time to time by the President.

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

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

Approved August 25, 1987

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

2.3 Vision and Mission

2.3.1 Mission Statement

As a strong partner, we strive to create sound policies promptly for commerce and trade that facilitate private sector growth and innovations, while setting standards that will empower all our consumers to make informed decisions improving the quality of life for all.

In particular we will facilitate private sector growth, and set good policies and standards to achieve this.

Among our many partners we will be particularly focused on existing and new business, consumers, and helping move the informal into the formal sector.

We will do this with respect for all partners, with accountability for efficient and effective performance and with professional standards at a high level of integrity

2.3.2 Vision

GROW

Good policy for trade

Revitalizing the economy

Opening up the private sector

Work opportunities for the future

“Good policy, for revitalizing the Liberian economy for private sector expansion providing employment opportunities for the people of Liberia”.

2.4 MoCI Strategic Plan 2013-2016

In the rebranding process introduced by the SMT of the Ministry, a three-year Strategic Plan to address three Results Areas necessary for the cumulative success in achieving our goals: *Good policy for trade, Revitalizing the economy, Opening up the Private Sector and facilitating Work opportunities for the future*; was adopted and scheduled for implementation from 2013 thru 2016. A mid-term review of activities undertaken and goals to be achieved indicate notable achievements by the administration. It has been decided that those tasks which have not been completed will be addressed at a retreat slated for the first quarter ending, 2016. Each result area specifies strategies that the Ministry will undertake to ensure success during the period of this plan (2013-2016): (a) Facilitating Jobs Creation through the Promotion of Industries including SMEs; (b) Facilitating International Trade between Liberia and Partners, and (c) Capacity and Organizational Development of the Ministry for Improved Performance.

2.5 Executive Summary

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has the statutory mandate to annually report on the state of play of the Country's trade activities. In pursuant of this mandate, the Ministry has been undergoing a rebranding process to ensure our domestic private sector and capacities are strengthened. This Executive Summary highlights major accomplishments across the Ministry policy areas during the year 2015 with key activities and details set out in this Report. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is organized by the below listed Bureaus:

The Bureau of Administration successfully renovated the Ministry's Customer Service Center to accommodate three windows that will be occupied by the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Petty Trade Division as a one stop shop (register Petty Trade, create Tax Identification Number (TIN) and receive payments) to smoothly facilitate trade. The Bureau also facilitated the training of sixteen (16) staff from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Record Management, Report Writing, Performance Management, Customer Service and Human Resource Management at LIPA. Thirty (30) staff was also trained within the ministry's computer lab in Microsoft Office and eighteen (18) staff participated in a Professional Refresher Driver Training Course conducted by a professional driving school.

The Bureau of Trade Services was the lead bureau at the Ministry of commerce and Industry coordinating Liberia's accession to the WTO. A post accession implementation plan has been developed and submitted to potential donors. In compliance with the WTO Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures, the Bureau of Trade Services reduced the number of product category requiring Import Permit Declaration (IPD) from seventeen (17) to eleven (11).

To improve the trade policy indicators of Liberia under the Millennium Challenges Corporation program, the Bureau of Trade Services has completed IT upgrading of the Liberia Business Registry to smoothly enhance the business registration process and further shorten the turnaround time to register a business.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry through the Bureau of Trade Services, is set to launch a mobile business registration campaign to provide business registration services to rural businesses in February 2016.

The Bureau of Industry has worked to strengthen and promote industrial development in Liberia during the year 2015. The Bureau has concluded the following during the year under review:

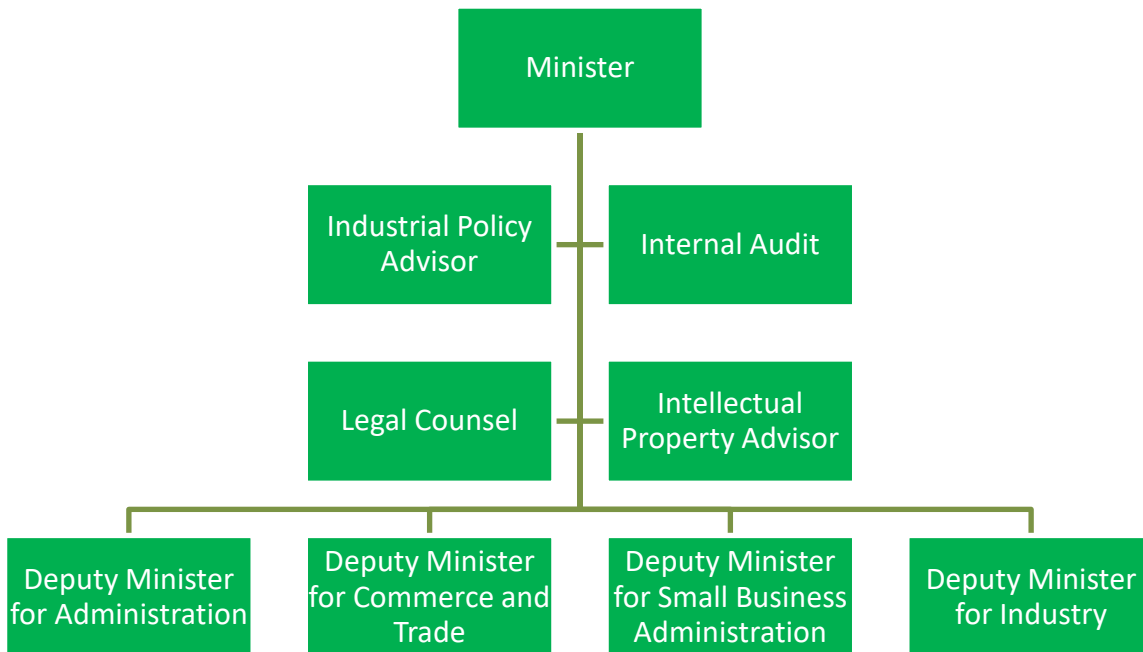
- Drafted a National Quality Policy and awaiting validation in March 2016.
- Constituted a technical Committee for the National Inquiry Point (NIP) and the National Notification Authority(NNA)

- That the Bureau of Industry adopted fifteen international standards to national standards and established a technical committee on CODEX.
- That the Bureau of Industry will facilitate the construction of the Lofa Women Weaving Center in Kolahun, Lofa County in February 2016.
- That the Bureau of Industry will construct a furniture center to include a wood workshop and showcase for carpenters currently working with rubber wood.

The Bureau of Small Business Administration successfully hosted the 3rd Annual MSME Conference and Trade Fair under the **Theme-Buying Liberian, Building Liberia** with focus on **Youth Innovation for Economic Empowerment**.

2.6 Organogram

New Basic Structure



2.7 Special Project Implementation Unit (SPIU)

2.7.1 Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)

Below is a matrix depicting the implementation status of the EIF / SPIU project.

Tier 1, Phase 2: EIF/NIU					
Indicator	Activity	Status	Challenges	Achievement Narrative / Rating	Next Step
DTIS Update Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of DTIS 2008 performance 	<p>Final draft report Submittedreflect ing stakeholders comments from consultation workshop held in 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validation workshop scheduled for July 8, 2015 ▪ Printing and publication of the final Report is expected by 31 July 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Too many bureaucracies to mining needed data •GoL data are not easily accessible •GoL offices are slow to respond to data inquiry •GoL offices input to inquiries are not always in-depth and thorough, perhaps due to constant staff changes or over engagement of senior staff •Difficult to get timely response to inquiry from GoL offices •Policy response from collaborating ministries dealing with cross sector issues did not always work well; turf and territoriality on which agency of GoL should lead were difficult to resolve or help accelerate our work •Urgency and quick action to mutually reinforce the work of the Bank and its principle partner MoCI was not always enabling for 	<p>-Second draft DTIS update completed & final report expected to be validated within two weeks of this report.</p> <p>90%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Validation of the 2013 DTIS Update Report -Printing and publication of the Validated DTIS update document

Tier 1, Phase 2: EIF/NIU						
Indicator	Activity	Status	Challenges	Achievement Narrative / Rating		Next Step
			speedy completion of the report.			
MOCI Operational Manual.	A detailed plan clearly setting out the policies, procedures and actions the departments of the Ministry will take to support the strategic objectives and plans of the Senior Management Team.	First draft document completed and receiving comments and inputs from members of the SMT	Slow pace of review and receipt of comments	Completion of first draft	55%	Completion of final draft doc. reflecting comments. Approval by SMT Document is functional

Tier 1, Phase 2: EIF/NIU						
Indicator	Activity	Status	Challenges	Achievement Narrative / Rating	Next Step	
Liberia Market Place	A one-stop show case and sales shop for locally produced commodities by Liberian entrepreneurs.	Show casing and serving as a source and sales centre for Liberian made product	-Poor finishing to package -Insufficient space to adequately operate. - No access to internet -Fluctuation of electricity -Budget constraint -Unclear reporting line	-Gained vendors' trust, -Regular promotion of the products at a wide range of events.	70	-Prepare proposal for funding - Identifying funding providers
Trade Data Harmonization	Synchronization of the collection and publication of all trade data from source agencies.	.Regular monthly technical meeting held to review and harmonize data from trade data collecting agencies	-No consensus on data harmonization, -Constant late arrivals of data reports from the borders. -need of quantity and quality of trained data collectors at borders point	Well attended regular monthly meetings held as planned; Some improvement in harmonization of trade data	55	-The whole initiative need reviewing, -Term of reference for the technical Working Group, -A policy or guidance group need to be review and consider
National Steering Committee		Operating effectively and efficiently; 2 quarterly meetings held in two quarters as required	. Time . Attendance at meeting No meetings for over a year – before March 2015	Two committee Meetings called and successfully held in two consecutive quarters.	50%	Planning for 3rd quarter meeting - scheduled for 24 September
Project Coordinator	Undertake recruitment processes	Recruitment process completed and successful candidate, Sayon Henry Yaidoo, in post as of March 2, 2013.	Identifying a suitable candidate to meet MOCI and the Executive Secretariat of EIF,	Project Coordinator in post and progressively delivering	95%	-Complete the employment /consulting contract agreement -Deliver as set out in MOU, Contract Agreement and Work Plan
Economist	Recruitment process	Recruitment in process	Identifying a candidate fit for purpose	First set of tests and interviews held; Non fit for purpose	50	Re-advertised; conduct tests and interviews
Tourism and Furniture Feasibility Studies	Prepare a proposal and funding request for 2 feasibility studies	Proposal and Feasibility Request submitted and accepted by EIF	- Time - Local information mining	Submission of final package of proposal documents to ES of EIF at WTO	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarding of assignment contract to WTC Start of the studies in September 2015
EIF FINANCIAL Performance						
Tier1 Phase-2 project funding						

Tier 1, Phase 2: EIF/NIU						
Indicator	Activity	Status	Challenges	Achievement Narrative / Rating		Next Step
as per MOU	US\$600,000.00 100% of MOU funding					
Allocation to EIF/NIU up to June 30 2015	US\$255,000.00 43% of MOU funding					
Actual spent to 30 June 2015	US\$152,491.17 60% of allocation					
Unspent allocation to NIU as of July 1, 2015	US\$102,508.83 40% of allocation					
Unallocated fund as per MOU	US\$345,000.00 57% of MOU funding					
JAPANESE COMMUNITY GRANT						
Indicator	Activity	Current Status	Challenge	Achievement Narrative / Rate		Next step
Food Aid - Rice	Monetization of the KR rice donation from the Japanese Government; Sale /distribution of the KR rice donation	Sales and distribution proceeding as per agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of the rice (2012) Limited market acceptance Poor monitoring by MOCI inspectorate 	Successful hand-over ceremony	60 %	Await next assignments
Petroleum product ("Non-Project Grant Aid	Monetization of the non-project donation from the Japanese Government; Sale /distribution of the KR rice donation	Technical work progressing	Time and teething contractual procedures	Exchange of notes (E/N) signed between the Governments of Liberia & Japan	50 %	A technical meeting to accelerate pace
The Counterpart Valued Fund (CVF)	Coordination and verification of the implementation of the CVF and assess socio-economic impact on the Liberian economy	The Diah bridge is over 50 per cent near completed	Delays in remittance of final payment	Construction work progressing satisfactorily	80 %	Completion of the bridge
PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE TO TRADE SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS IN LIBERIA						
United Nations Development Programme Private Sector Development AWP 2015 Supported Initiatives (patsil)						
Industrial Sector Analysis	Conduct detailed industrial sector analysis to identify key competitive sectors for targeted action and support.	Preliminary consultation conducted and Inception report drafted.	Delay in disbursement of funds for logistics by the UNDP	Inception report drafted	10 %	To conduct data collection in 7 of the 15 counties of Liberia
Industrial Support program	-Monitor implementation -Conduct public awareness campaign	Consultant employment Contract being finalized by MOCI	Bureaucratic bottlenecks at UNDP	ToR for consulting assignment has been prepared	5%	Signing of contract of employment and deployment of consultant
Industrial skills development	Develop and implement a National Labor Productivity Program	Consultant employment Contract being finalized by MOCI	Bureaucratic bottlenecks at UNDP	ToR for consulting assignment has been prepared	5%	Signing of contract of employment and deployment of

Tier 1, Phase 2: EIF/NIU						
Indicator	Activity	Status	Challenges	Achievement Narrative / Rating	Next Step	
					consultant	
GOL Intervention Policies for Industry	Develop clear policy guidelines for strategic government intervention	Consultant employment Contract being finalized by MOCI	Bureaucratic bottlenecks at UNDP	ToR for consulting assignment has been prepared	5%	Signing of contract of employment and deployment of consultant
Private Sector Website	Hiring an IT consultant; Development of an e-commerce and Website;	Consultant employment Contract being finalized by MOCI	Bureaucratic bottlenecks at UNDP	ToR for consulting assignment has been prepared	5%	Signing of contract of employment and deployment of consultant
Programme of Assistance to Trade Support Institutions in Liberia	Develop of policies and capacity building mechanism to enhance trade	Two procurement consultants selected; Contracts submitted to AfDB for no objection.	Bureaucratic bottlenecks at AfDB	Two procurement consultants selected	5%	Signing of contract of employment and deployment of 2 consultant; Development of MOCI procurement manual
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION						
National Board of Trade's support to Liberia's WTO Accession	The provision of individual and institutional capacity development, technical advice and certain logistics in Liberia's accession to the WTO.	Liberia is working towards having a new Working Party Meeting end of July with the WTO Members. Trip to Geneva to finalize documentation ahead of this meeting may take place 22 June-26 June. (Accession likely to take place in December. After accession support will focus on the implementation of commitments and developing capacity to fulfill its rights and obligations as a WTO member)	Short deadlines for necessary domestic reform and adoption of amended/new laws. Many deadlines in July 2015.	<p>In the following areas the project has provided some support, either directly or through earlier input, during March-June.</p> <p>A second Working Party Meeting has been held with WTO members in Geneva.</p> <p>The Legislative Action Plan has been updated and sent to the WTO secretariat.</p> <p>Several bilateral negotiations have been concluded.</p> <p>Liberia has continued to provide extensive information about its foreign trade regime to the WTO Members.</p> <p>New laws in the fields of SPS and TBT have been drafted.</p>	60%	<p>Assist Liberia to finalize documentation ahead of the next Working Party Meeting (Working Party Report).</p> <p>Assist MoCI to coordinate the adoption necessary laws.</p> <p>Assist MoCI to coordinate to implement commitments.</p> <p>Assist Liberia in</p>

Tier 1, Phase 2: EIF/NIU					
Indicator	Activity	Status	Challenges	Achievement Narrative / Rating	Next Step
					establishing SPS and TBT NNA/NEPs Continuous capacity development of relevant stakeholders

2.7.2 Training and Capacity building

There was no capacity building plan built-in the work plan and no progress on capacity building during this period.

2.7.3 Sustainability and Exit Strategy

With the view of transitioning into the Ministry of Commerce and Industrial at the appropriate time, the EIF/SPIU project continues to implement its integration strategy. The Unit provides technical, economic and trade related support and advice across all Bureaus of the Ministry and; working closely with the World Bank, had a productive meeting with UNDP with plan to pursue regular contacts while cementing relations with other stakeholders.

2.7.4 Communication and Dissemination

Work with and provide support and advice to small business entrepreneurs, especially with Smallholders who produce “made-in-Liberia” products’ –earrings, quilts, weaving of local made fabric etc. Support to a wide range of organizations through the NSC, and within bureaus of the MOCI.

2.7.5 Fiduciary and Organizational Arrangements

2.7.5.1 Organization and fiduciary management of the project

2.7.5.2 Financial Management

There were no financial management intricacies during the period under review.

2.8 Program of Assistance to Trade Support Institutions in Liberia (PATSIL)

PATSIL is funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and is intended to strengthen selected Liberia's trade-support institutions in both the Public and Private Sectors. The three institutions to be impacted by the program are: The Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Liberia Chamber of Commerce and the National Port Authority.

2.8.1 Introduction

This is the third progress report for the implementation of the Programme of Assistance to Trade Support Institutions in Liberia (PATSIL). This report covers the period April – September 2015. In August 2014, the project received the first disbursement from the Bank amounting to USD497, 015.81 (representing 50% of the Grant).

This report provides a status of project activities as at September 2015 and key steps taken thus far in implementation. The report includes a Financial Section, which provides an up-to-date narrative of the status of project finances.

2.8.2 Project Objective

The main objective of the PATSIL project is to strengthen the capacities of trade support institutions, namely; the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI), National Port Authority (NPA) and the Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC). The anticipated outcomes are:

- Improved policy framework for the trade sector
- Improved human resources capacity of the trade support institutions to conduct analytical work, formulate and implement trade policies;
- Improved productivity and performance of trade support institutions achieved through provision of material resources

2.8.3 Main achievements and status of implementation

During the period under review, the Project recruited two procurement experts; one onsite procurement expert and one offsite Procurement expert to provide assistance with the procurement of goods and services for the Project. The rationale to split the procurement expert post which was originally planned for one expert was a result of strategy to mitigate the negative impact of the Ebola crisis in Liberia since the foreign expert who was earlier recruited could not travel to the country to take up the assignment due to the crisis. In this implementation period the following were achieved:

2.8.3.1 PILLAR I: Technical Assistance

- ***Onsite Procurement Expert***

- Working closely with the Onsite Procurement Expert, we have begun the process of recruiting a consulting firm that will provide technical assistance under the project. Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) was therefore prepared and request for no objection was submitted to the African Development Bank (AfDB) for the publication of the REOI. The Request was granted on 15th September 2015 and the REOI was subsequently published on the respective websites of the AfDB, UNDB and Ministry of Commerce & Industry of Liberia.

2.8.3.2 PILLAR II: Human Resource Capacity

The Onsite Procurement Expert has been engaged in capacity building activities in the area of procurement as follows:

- The expert has prepared procurement training materials and has successfully conducted two training sessions.
- The first training was held for 8 staff of the Ministry; 1 from the Finance section, 2 from Internal Audit and 5 from Procurement. Topics covered included Filing and Documentation. The training session was held on July 22nd and lasted for 2.5 hrs.
- The second training accommodated 5 staff; 3 from Procurement, 1 from Finance and 1 from Internal Audit. Topic covered was procurement planning. The training was held on August 7 and for the duration of 1.5hrs.

2.8.3.3 PILLAR III: Logistical Support

The Onsite Procurement Expert has also prepared bid documents for the procurement of ICT equipment. On September 4, 2015 a no objection was then obtained from the AfDB for publication of the document in two local dailies which was done and a bid evaluation panel set up. The ICT equipment will benefit the national Port Authority and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

2.8.4 Financial Status

The African Development (AfDB) approved a budget of US\$994,034.61 for the PATSIL project USD497,015.81 was transferred into PATSIL account at the Central Bank of Liberia.

2.8.5 Conclusion

The PATSIL Management team and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry take this opportunity to express appreciation for the level of cooperation shown by the AfDB especially in our effort to progress with the project activities despite challenges encountered.

It is therefore our ardent hope that the level of cooperation between our both institutions will continue as we move ahead with implementation of the project.

2.9 Liberia Innovation Fund for Entrepreneurship (LIFE)

The Liberia Innovation Fund for Entrepreneurship (LIFE) is a private sector investment fund which focuses on developing and promoting innovations in the Liberian private sector by investing in capital infrastructure projects that promote the growth of SMEs and promote value addition within key industrial sectors as an implementation tool for the MSME Policy.

The LIFE Fund is also intended to provide seed funding to support the growth and development of industries in local communities and, provide economic employment opportunities to community dwellers and improve their livelihood in a way that unlocks the potential of value chains or foster entrepreneurship.

2.9.1 *The Lofa Women Weaving Center*

The Lofa Women Weaving Center was initiated in March 2014 to organize and train women in the Northern region of Liberia to produce high quality textiles from locally grown cotton and provide them gainful occupation that is critical for job creation and poverty reduction in that part of Liberia. Given the Ministry's launch of the Wear Your Pride Campaign announced in the President's Annual Message in 2015, the demand for the Lofa Cloth increased substantially.

The Construction of the Center will enhance production to meet that demand while providing sustainable livelihoods for the many women who are active in the cotton industry. This project is a collaboration between the Department of Industry, RIPE Program (Rural Industrial Program for Economic Empowerment) and the Department of Small Business Administration market access implementation under the Small Business Empowerment Act.

The estimated cost is **US\$230,747.29**, **total expended cost to date, is US\$161,523.11 and balance due to contractor is US\$69,224.18**. The Project is expected to be completed by December 2017.

2.9.1.1 Status of the Project

Construction is expected to begin in January 2016.

2.9.1.2 Socio-Economic Impact of the Project

The LWWC will serve as a critical vehicle for job creation and poverty reduction in that part of the Liberia. The project will address the following:

- A training center to augment the skills of current designers and weavers of Lofa cloth and train new entrants into the textile weaving industry
- A central point to bring together traditional designers/weavers of textile products from across the country

- Creates employment opportunities for the rural communities and improve their livelihood, contributing to poverty reduction
- Creates opportunity for the vulnerable and unemployed-women, youth, disabled to acquire and develop skills in the textile sector

2.9.2 The Liberian Market Place-Trade Store

The Liberian Market Place was initiated in 2014 to showcase Liberian made products. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is currently negotiating to expand the existing trade store.

2.9.3 The Economic Empowerment of Entrepreneurs (E+ Program)

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry during its SBA 2015 MSME Conference launched the first phase of the E+ Program with support from the Government of Japan through its LIFE Fund and the International Finance Corporation. The project is intended to infuse seed capital into 10 key sectors of the economy and to foster the government's inclusive growth agenda. Some of the sectors under the project are packaging, sausage production, fruit juice production, labeling, etc.

The project is designed to promote and empower youth entrepreneurs through training and access to finance. The program also seeks to identify and promote the next generation of promising youth innovators with great ideas and solutions to real challenges in business and society.

2.9.3.1 Status of the Project

US\$100,000 was disbursed as seed funding from the LIFE Fund to BSC for onward disbursement to the ten entrepreneurs by BSC. To date, BSC has disbursed US\$80,000 to eight of the ten entrepreneurs who have met all the requirements. The eight beneficiaries are as follows: Michaels's Engraving, Witness Multimedia Service, Edutainment Playground Center, G.G. God Fearing Business Center, Gee-K Packaging Business, Family Group of Companies, Zoqueh Naturals, Samatta God's Favor Business center.

2.10 Japanese Monetization Project

In 2008, the Government of Liberia and the Government of Japan signed a bilateral agreement in the form of an Exchange of Note, (E/N), for KR Food Aid (rice) in an effort to support Liberia's socio-economic development under the Japanese Oversea Development Assistance program (ODA). Subsequently, in 2011, the two Governments again signed two separate E/Ns for KR Food Aid and Non-Project Grant Aid. To date, two categories of aid exist:

- I. The 'Kennedy-Round' (KR) Food Aid (rice)
- II. The Non-Project Grant Aid (NPG) (petroleum)

While some of the received grants have been completely monetized, others are yet in the process of being monetized. The Government of Liberia established a Counterpart Value Fund (CVF) at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) for the deposit of proceeds generated from the sale/distribution of the Japanese Grant commodities. The funds deposited are subject to the written approval of the Government of Japan in the form of a “Note Verbale” (N/V) through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.10.1 Monetization

Most of the commodities that were granted to Liberia in the form of rice and petroleum products have been successfully monetized. Regarding Food Aid in the form of the Kennedy Rounds, 86 per cent of the amount to be monetized has been monetized and regarding the Non-Project Grant Aid in the form of Petroleum, over 90 per cent have been monetized. Since 2011, MoCI has used a competitive bidding process for each round and awarded the monetization to several contractors. This has resulted in successfully completed monetization of KR 2011 and KR 2012 (and previously KR 2008).

The two most recent rounds of Food Aid (KR 2013, KR 2014), as well as the 2015 petroleum grant, are currently being monetized. The Government of Japan can expect GoL to handle the monetization of potential future commodity grants well, as lessons from the past have been incorporated into the new monetization guide and good working relationships with trustworthy rice and petroleum companies have been established.

2.10.2 Approved Projects under the Counterpart Value Funded projects

Table 1 represents all approved projects, implementing agency, approved amount, disbursed amount and outstanding balance. Figure 1 illustrates the project scope in LD or USD, depending on project.

Table 1

Approved Projects				
Project	Agency	Approved Cost	Funds Disbursed	Funds outstanding
Paddy Rice #1	MoA	USD 4,000,000.00	LD 256,967,816.00	USD 459,923.64
Paddy Rice #2	MoA	LD 289,173,150.00	LD 155,469,150.00	LD 133,704,000.00
5 Warehouses	MoA	USD1,400,000.00	USD 1,200,000.00	USD 200,000.00
Life Fund	MoCI	LD 58,187,500.00	LD 58,187,500.00	LD 43,487,355.37
MoFA Support	MoFA	USD 731,412.00	LD 33,316,422.00	USD 367,706.00
MSME	MoCI	USD 889,097.00	USD 889,097.00	USD 0.00
ELWA CIDP	MPW	USD 5,600,000.00	USD 2,247,600.00	USD 3,352,400.00
C.M. Bridges	MoIA	USD 1,949,951.69	USD 1,284,040.72	USD 665,910.97

2.10.3 Socio-Economic Impact of the Program

The Japanese grants continue to have tremendous impact in transforming the social and economic life of Liberia's population across geographical areas and population segments. First, the grants have helped increase food security and reduce the amount of foreign exchange spent on rice imports through boosting rice production (Paddy Rice) and decreasing post-harvest losses (5 Warehouses) across the Liberian rice producing belt. Second, the grants continue to help local entrepreneurs through the establishment of the SME department within MoCI which organizes the annual MSME conference and helps MSMEs expand, as well as the LIFE Fund, which has been used to increase commerce-related activities by providing grants to successful entrepreneurs and facilities for commercial activities. Third, the grants have, despite challenges, helped build necessary capacity within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Fourth, the grants are about to make large areas of Cape Mount County accessible through the completion of key bridges.

2.11 Liberia Intellectual Property System

The Intellectual Property System (IPS) has, since 2007, operated under the framework of the Intellectual Property Development Plan (IPDP).

Under the IPDP several pillars were identified to promote and strengthen IP in Liberia. They are:

- Amendment of Intellectual Property Law
- Ratification of all WIPO / ARIPO protocols;
- Amalgamation of the offices of the IPS, i.e., Copyright & Industrial Property Offices
- Establishment of the Collective Societies
- Using Geographical Indicators (GIs) as tool for Liberia's economic recovery;
- Inclusion of IP in the curriculum of institutions of higher learning, beginning at the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU) – a first draft has been submitted by WIPO;
- Training and Capacity Building (Seminars & Workshops)

The Intellectual Property System (IPS) of Liberia continues to operate under the framework of the WIPO-Liberia endorsed Intellectual Property Development Plan (IPDP) for the Intellectual Property System of Liberia (IPS).

Under the period 2015 the following objectives were achieved:

- Increase in the training of personnel for the IPS, Training include:
 - IP Administration
 - Patent drafting

- Trademark registration
- IP Enforcement
- Branding of Made in Liberia Products (SMEs)
- Human Resource Development Overview
- Strategic Planning
- Tariffs of the sale of Audio-visual works
- Ratification and printing into handbill of the following WIPO Legal instruments (Conventions, Protocols, and Treaties) to which Liberia has acceded:
 - An act to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are Blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled;
 - An act to ratify the Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs within the framework of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO);
 - An act to ratify the Swakopmund Protocol on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Folklore –TK/EF (ARIPO);
 - An act to ratify the Agreement on the Creation of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO);
 - An act to ratify the Banjul Protocol on Marks of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO);
 - An act to ratify the Patent Law Treaty.

Meanwhile, the Liberian Senate has ratified the new IP Amended Law which is pending concurrence by the Lower House (House of Representative). Negotiations have begun for the construction of the new IP building. The land has been acquired and the plan for construction is underway. The Republic of China alongside WIPO has promised to render some technical and financial contribution towards this end.

3.0 BUREAU OF ADMINISTRATION



Hon. Frantz Che Sawyer

Deputy Minister for Administration

3.1 Overview

The Bureau of Administration at the Ministry of Commerce is charged with managing and coordinating the financial, material and human resources of the Ministry. This Bureau develops, defends and executes the approved fiscal budget as well as mobilizes resources as may be required for the efficient and successful implementation of all the Ministry's projects and programs. The Bureau has successfully instituted a number of major reforms.

During the period under review the Bureau of Administration provided maximum support to all Bureaus and units of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. While recognizing the existence of many fiscal constraints, administration managed available resources to ensure that a significant portion of our targeted goals were achieved.

3.2 Activity Highlights

Highlights of the Bureau's achievements during the period under review are as follows:

- Ministry successfully upgraded the allowances to improve the income of its Directors, Assistant Directors, Inspectors and Standard Officers.
- The Human Resource Division successfully sponsored sixteen (16) staff to be trained in Record Management, Report Writing, Performance Management, Customer Service and Human Resource Management at LIPA. Thirty (30) staff was also trained within the ministries computer lab in Microsoft Word and Basic Excel. The Bureau also facilitated the sponsorship of Eighteen (18) drivers who benefited from a Professional Refresher Driver Training Course conducted by a professional driving school. Twelve (12) staff

from various division within the Ministry also benefited from Foreign Training in China, Ghana, Sweden, South Africa and Japan.

- The Ministry has successfully procured Life and Medical Insurance for more than 200 of its employees allowing them to have access to various health facilities in Monrovia and extended to the counties.
- The Bureau of Administration successfully renovated the Customer Services Center which is located on the ground floor of the Ministry to accommodate three windows that will be occupied by the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Petty Trade Division as a one stop shop to register, create Tax Identification Number (TIN) and receive payments.
- The successful completion of the MSME Audit that also ushered a smooth transition from the Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises Division into the Bureau of Small Business Administration covering its financials and fixed assets.
- Renovation works also covered the newly created Bureau of Small Business Administration which is now fully functional.

3.3 Division of Knowledge Management & Archives

Overview

The Division of Knowledge Management & Archives (KM&A) has the responsibility of documenting and archiving all of the Ministry's records – to include policies, regulations, programs, projects and activities being implemented towards the achieving of its goals and mandate. This Division also assists Administration by conducting investigations and research, as needed, to ensure that activities being implemented are aligned with the Ministry's mandate and Strategic Plan.

Additional activities of the Division are representing the Ministry at the technical working group of the National Statistics & Spatial Systems at LISGIS and provide supervision for the implementation of our Monitoring & Evaluation Program. As a key resource unit, KM&A also makes contributions to the other Bureaus of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Activity Highlights

- Represented MoCI at ECOWAS Steering Committee Meeting of the TNCB Project in Abuja, Nigeria. (Jan.28 – 2 February,2015).
- Participated in Economic Partnership Agreement Development Projects Validation Meeting (Oct. 2015) hosted by ECOWAS in Lome, Togo;

- Developed Action matrix & reporting format for the implementation of M & E.
- Participated in a GoL / UNDP sponsored Development Dialogue Workshop on SDG's and their Statistical Foundations on the Domestication and Implementation of SDGs – resulting in The Buchanan Communique on SDGs (16-21 Nov. 2015)
- Received training at LISGIS on DevInfo;

3.4 Division of Human Resource

Overview

The Human Resource Division performs functions relating to staff recruitment and placement, career development, promotion, job classification, salary administration and staff relations. The Division also supervises, controls, conducts, coordinate employees' training. In addition, the Division prepares terms of reference for The Ministry's staff and monitors staff performance & attendance at the Ministry. The Division's tasks include the following: (a) oversee all social and employees' welfare programs and activities, in collaboration with the Welfare Committee; (b) carry out job analysis, formulate and interpret personnel policy; (c) arrange transfer of staff, advertise vacancies, interview and evaluate applicants, make hiring and terms of employment recommendations, including submission of personnel listing to the Civil Service Agency and Ministry of Finance.

With the new strategic focus of the Ministry in rebranding its activities, institutional capacity building is paramount to senior management. To ensure that the right capacity is on-hand for the implementation of the new plan, The Ministry with support from the Deloitte Group carried out the below activities:

Activity Highlights:

- Fill out major positions for the Bureau of Small Business Administration (ICT Coordinator, Access to Market Director, Access to Finance Director, Access to Capacity Development and Performance Monitoring, Secretaries, Administrative Assistants).
- Fill out 10 vacancies in the ministry
- Carryout revision on the job description for all existing MoCI positions and transferred the MoCI job description into the Civil Service Agency job description format.
- The training unit was able to carry out trainings in Microsoft Office for over 20 staff of the Ministry

TABLE 1: Training Report Summary

Bureau	Staff Trained Locally	Staff Trained Internationally
Administration	21	1
Commerce and Trade Services	4	2
Industrial Services	2	7
Small Business Administration	0	2
TOTAL STAFF SENT FOR TRAINING		39

TABLE 2: Personnel Profile

Total number of employees	266
Males	212
Females	54
Age range	25 – 59
New Hires	9
Promotion	10
Transfers	14
Deaths	3
Education	
Master's Degree	8
Bachelor's Degree	88
Associates Degree	12
Undergraduate Student	66
High School Diploma	92
Computer knowledge	110
Contractors	39
Staff on Allowance	36
Retirement	8

3.5 Division of Finance

Overview

The Finance Division is headed by a Comptroller and assisted by a Deputy Comptroller. The Division is responsible for, amongst others the financial management of the Ministry which includes the preparation, management and execution of the annual budget, and all financial reports.

FY2014/2015 Core Budget Execution

The Finance Division commenced 2015 with the execution of the FY 2014/2015 Core Budget of US\$2,064,034; US\$271,552 of which was Grants for the Liberia Business Registry (LBR) and the balance US\$1,792,215 for Central Office. Of the US\$2,064,034, US\$1,124,974 or 55% was for **Compensation to Employees**; US\$667,508 or 32% for **Goods and Services** and 271,552 or 13% was for **Grants (Liberia Business Registry)**.

Of the US\$2,064,034 appropriated to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for FY2014/2015, US\$1,983,927.68 or 96% was allotted and US\$1,784,255 or 90% of the allotment was expended.

MoCI FY2015/2016 Core Budget

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry received an adjusted budget of US\$2,825,240 from the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for **FY2016/2017**, at the close of the fiscal year budget preparation process. US\$1,229,956 or 44%

of the US\$**2,825,240** was appropriated for **Compensation to Employees, US\$929,196** or 32% for Goods **and Services, US\$163,327** or 6% for Fixed Assets Acquisition and **US\$502,755** or 18% as Grants including the Liberia Business Registry.

The distribution of the budget among the four bureaus of the Ministry is as follows.

- Bureau of Commerce and Trade ServicesUS\$802,289 or 28%
- Bureau of Industrial Services.....\$623,866 or 22%
- Bureau of Administration\$1,284,578 or 45%
- Bureau of Small Business Administration.....\$114,507 or 4%

MoCIFY2016/2017 Budget Execution

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry received a budget of **US\$2,464,439** from the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for FY2015/2016 at the close of the fiscal year budget preparation process. **US\$1,229,964** or 50% of **US\$2,464,439** is appropriated for **Compensation to Employees, US\$686,975** or 28% for Goods **and Services, US\$97,500** or 4% for Capital Expenditure and **US\$450,000** or 18% as Grants (Liberia Business Registry).

The distribution of the budget among the four bureaus of the Ministry is as follows.

- Bureau of Commerce and Trade ServicesUS\$781,887 or 32%
- Bureau of Industrial Services.....\$553,994 or 22%
- Bureau of Administration\$878,558 or 36%
- Bureau of Small Business Administration.....250,000 or 10%

MoCI FY2015/2016 PSIP Budget

The amount of US\$200,000 was approved for the Ministry for Wool and Cloth Factory Projects, US\$100,000 for the Wool Project and US\$100,000 for the Cloth Factory Project.

MoCI FY2015/2016 Budget Execution

As at December 31, 2015, total allotment of the Annual Appropriation of US\$2,464,439, US\$1,335,587 or 54% was allotted and US\$1,063,468 or 43% of the budget expended. The balance in allotment was US\$272,119 or 11% and the balance in appropriation was US\$1,128,852 or 46%. There was no movement in project budgets.

Achievements

- MoCI FY2014/2015 budget was executed at more than 90%; and
- Budget execution during the year was consistent with the Public Financial Management Law of 2009 and the Public Procurement and Concession Act of 2010.

Challenges

- Inadequate budgetary support to the Ministry by the Government of Liberia;
- Rigorous procurement processes sometimes delay budget execution;
- Inadequate logistics for the Finance Division (i.e. computers, photo copier; air conditioners) air conditioners especially for the IFMIS computers;
- MoCI IFMIS rollout and problems(delay) associated with processing GOL Payment vouchers and Local Purchase Orders;
- Training opportunities for Finance Division staff;
- Adherence to rules governing public procurement and the expenditure of public funds; and
- Payment of outstanding bills

Way forward

- Seeking more budgetary support for improvement in the execution of the Ministry statutory mandate;
- Provision of the above-mentioned logistics for the Finance Division and the maintenance of the IFMIS machines;
- Provide training opportunities for staff of the Finance Division; and
- Engage the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning regarding the payment of outstanding bills

3.6 Division of Administrative Support Services

Overview

The Administrative Support Service Division was established in 2013, as a result of an assessment of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry done by USAID in 2011. The function of this Division is to ensure that the Administrative and Logistical needs of the Ministry are met while maintaining a verified registry of MoCI assets. Further, the division is also responsible for the maintenance of the Ministry's fleet of vehicles and real properties.

Activity Highlights:

- Successfully renovated one-stop shop within the Ministry, to be used by LRA & the Petty Trade Unit of the Ministry
- Facilitated the Coding of the Ministry's Assets
- Supervised the renovation & the painting of Liberia Business Registry.
- Facilitated the purchase of insurance of all MOCI vehicles.
- Processed request for stationary supplies for all bureaus, divisions and Units within the Ministry

3.7 Procurement Division

Overview

The Procurement Division is one of the cardinal arms of the Ministry in the implementation of the Public Procurement and Concession Act. It ensures that goods, works and services are procured in accordance with the PPCC regulations.

Routine activities performed by the procurement Division include:

- Preparation of the Ministry's procurement plan
- Preparation of bid documents
- Preparation of evaluation reports for the procurement of goods, works, and services.

Achievement Highlights:

During the reporting period, the Division achieved the following:

- Awarded personnel insurance contract to Mutual Benefits Assurance Corporation.
- Awarded stationery contract to Metro Stationery Store.
- Developed EOI for the construction of the Lofa Women Wearing Center in Lofa County.
- Prepared bid documents for the supply of goods.
- Procured two vehicles (Nissan Patrol) for the use of the Bureau of Small Business Administration.
- Concluded the procurement processes for the purchase of one mini bus for the use of the Liberia Business Registry (LBR)
- Completed the procurement process for the supply of computers by UNDP and the African Development Bank.
- Participated in stages of training for the PATSIL Project sponsored by ACDB in bid evaluation for the selection of consultant and the preparation of bid documents

3.8 Division of Information Technology Support Services

Overview

The Division of Information Technology and Support Services (ITSS) is fully responsible for the overall technological aspect of the Ministry; its obligation is to provide quality IT policies, implement strategies and assistance in the working environment and support the Ministry's vision.

The Division is also responsible for updating, monitoring, maintaining and securing the technology system - including hardware and software installation and maintenance, internet connectivity, and ICT accessories. The Division serves as webmaster for the Ministry and works in collaboration with the Public Affairs Division in ensuring that the Ministry's website consistently has the latest news and information relating to the Ministry.

Moreover, the Division provides basic computer training to employees to enhance productivity at the Ministry.

Activity Highlights

- Procurement and installation of Cyber Roam-thus leading to the creation of IP Addresses for all users;
- Dropbox Training – trained 20 staff (Bureau of Administration, Industry and Commerce) in using the Dropbox application for easy information sharing;
- Website updating for the Ministry's events and achievements, including the 2015 MSME Conference and Liberia accession to the WTO

Constraints and Way Forward

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure offers a range of solutions and technology that form an integral part of the efficient operation of any organization, essential for effective service delivery. As modern technology is constantly evolving, there is a need for systems to evolve and become even more efficient, thus improving service delivery. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is no exception. Considering the Ministry's broad mandate, it needs to invest in ICT infrastructure migration and the procurement of up-to-date ICT software and hardware. This will enable the Ministry to provide services at a level on par with the rest of the world.

3.9 Division of Public Affairs

Overview

The Division of Public Affairs is charged with the responsibility of adequately articulating and disseminating the commercial and industrial policies and programs of the Ministry. The Division also reports on various activities of the Ministry and informs the consuming public on matters affecting them, for example, prices, the discovery of unwholesome commodities, etc.

Activity Highlights

- Provided full print and electronic media coverage for the third Bi-Annual Small Business Administration MSME Trade Fair. The conference was held at the Monrovia City Hall from the 17th -18th of November 2015.
- The Division led and coordinated a team of media officials to the Free Port of Monrovia for the presentation of 8000 metric tons of rice to the Liberian government by the Government and people of Japan.
- Provided coverage for a one-day engagement session with the Legislature and the Senior Management Team of the Ministry. The session was attended by members of the House and Senate Committee on commerce.
- Facilitate the publication of a request for the expression of interest for the construction of the Lofa Women Weaving center.

4.0 BUREAU OF COMMERCE AND TRADE SERVICES



Hon. Cyril A. Allen, II
Deputy Minister for Commerce and Trade Services

4.1 Overview

It is my pleasure to report on our team's activities and achievements for the calendar year 2015. I would also like to thank everyone, especially our Bureau of Trade Services Staff members, for their diligent work in supporting the “**Rebranding**” effort that is being undertaken by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Our role has been simple and clear from the beginning, this made it easy to coordinate and monitor the facilitation of local and international trade, regulate and monitor prices of essential commodities and facilitate the growth of enterprises and protect consumers. I am happy to say that we have made significant achievements in various areas, which we are proud to highlight in this report.

The Bureau of Trade Services coordinated Liberia's Accession to the World Trade Organization in December 2015. The post-accession strategy has been developed and tabled to donors.

In conformity with the WTO Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures and the need to improve the trade policy indicator under the Millennium Challenge Corporation Program, the Bureau of Trade Services reduced the number of product categories requiring Import Permit Declaration (IPD) from seventeen (17) to eleven (11). The core products requiring IPDs are restricted to mainly consumables to protect the health of consumers.

The Bureau of Trade Services, as per its mandate, ensured the steady supply of, and stability in the prices of essential commodities (rice, cement, and petroleum products). The Bureau put in place mechanisms to strengthen monitoring of inventory and prices of these products through the publication of Weekly Market Reports and Commerce Today, a monthly bulletin of critical commodities.

The Bureau of Trade Services ensured the Liberia Business Registry underwent a complete IT upgrade, which has further improved the business registration process and further shortens the

time it takes to register a business. All modalities have been put in place to ensure the launch in February 2016 of a mobile business registration campaign to provide business registration services to businesses situated in rural Liberia. We look forward to this new working year 2016, and it is our hope that it be as performance driven as 2015 has been.

Thanks!

4.2 Activity Highlights

4.2.1 Liberia's Accession to the World Trade Organization

This commitment has been completed with December's accession to the WTO. The post-accession strategy has been developed and Liberia's Post-Accession Plan has been tabled to donors.

4.2.2 Streamlined Import Licensing Requirements

In conformity with the WTO Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures and the need to improve the trade policy indicator under the Millennium Challenge Corporation Program, the Ministry reduced the number of product category requiring Import Permit Declaration (IPD) from seventeen (17) to eleven (11). The core products requiring IPDs are restricted to mainly consumables to protect the health of consumers.

4.2.3 Stable Prices and Constant Supply of Bulk Commodities

The Ministry, as per its mandate, ensured the steady supply of, and stability in the prices of essential commodities (rice, cement, and petroleum products). The Ministry put in place mechanism to strengthen monitoring of inventory and prices of these products through the publication of Weekly Market Report and the Commerce Today, a monthly bulletin of critical commodities.

4.2.4 Liberian Business Registry

The business registry has undergone a complete IT upgrade, which has further improved the business registration process and further shortens the time it takes to register a business. All modalities have been put in place to ensure the launch in February 2016 of a mobile business registration campaign to provide business registration services to businesses situated in rural Liberia.

4.3 Division of Trade

Overview

The Division of Trade has a mandate to promote, regulate and monitor international trade. The Division is structured into three sections: Internal Commercial Relations, Trade Promotion Office and Trade Information Service. The Internal Commercial Relations section handles enquiries and correspondences pertaining to foreign commerce, the issuance of import and export permits, the authentication of product origins, and certificates of origin. The Trade Promotion Office (TPO) is the conduit for the government to develop, expand, diversify and promote trade, especially exports. The office collects statistical data and makes analysis according to trade classifications. The Trade Information Service (TIS) provides trade information and serves as a reference library. Recently, the TIS have been transformed into a Trade Information Center with the objective to promote agricultural exports, while at the same time facilitating export permit documentation.

Activity Highlights

- Streamlined the Import Request Form (IRF) process to ease the turnaround time in processing trade documents by processing all IRF invoices at BIVAC and introduction of a checklist, standard operating procedures, and rejection form;
- Reduced products requiring IPDs from 17 to 11 commodities;
- Developed Standard Operating Procedures for Imports and Export Processes at MoCI Central, BIVAC, as well as Freeport and RIA;
- Drafted the 2014 Trade Bulletin;
- Established a one-stop trade facilitation hub at the Robert International Airport (RIA);
- Facilitated consultations among stakeholders in various sectors by establishing Sector Working Groups for cocoa, oil palm fisheries and rubber. Key deliverables were the formulation of a draft regulation to addressing the binding constraints (licensing fee, quality, etc.) in the cocoa sector, and the identification of tax and licensing constraints to revive the domestic fishery market;
- Hosted the Trade Facilitation Forum (TFF) Meeting and began working with APM Terminals and the private sector to monitor and streamline non-tariff barriers that impede port trade facilitation at the Freeport;
- Participated in the WAMI/WAMZ technical trade meeting at CBL. Provided updates regarding trade policy, esp. WTO Accession, EPA, ETLs, CET, BIAT/CFTA and trade data;

Challenges

The Division is understaffed and in dire need of a vehicle.

4.4 WTO ORGANIZATION UNIT

Overview

WTO Unit was established at the Ministry in 2013 with the mandate to fast track Liberia accession process. The WTO Unit coordinates with all relevant ministries and agencies to fast track the accession process and implement post accession strategy work plan. Liberia in December 2015 acceded to the World Trade Organization at the 10th Ministerial Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Activity Highlights

- Participated in the technical drafting of Liberia's negotiation inputs (Services and Goods Offers, Responses to the Questions transmitted by Members, Action Plans on TBT and SPS, Legislative Action Plan and Table on Domestic Support and Export Subsidies in the Agricultural Sector, as well as the Draft Working Party Report;
- Concluded four Pulse Check Missions to fast track the WTO accession;
- Participated and supported the Chief Negotiator during bilateral negotiations with Chinese Taipei, Canada, EU, USA and Japan. All negotiations were concluded successfully;
- Completed the second, third and final Working Party Meeting on Liberia's accession to the WTO;
- Capacity Building for WTO Technical Working Group (TWG) members from various M&As:
 - a. Participated in the 2015 Global Seminar and Public Forum;
 - b. Participated in the video workshop on Trade Related Aspect of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) facilitated by ITC. Built capacity of staff in Intellectual Property Rights and WTO Agreement on Import Licensing;

4.4 Division of Price Analysis and Marketing

Division of Price Analysis and Marketing began as a price control and business monitoring division however the division has evolved in line with global trade best practice into a price monitoring and market surveillance division. Today the division's deliverables include development of market reports, technical analysis on pricing and commodity profiles for essential commodities (**Rice, Petroleum Products, Pharmaceutical Products, Cement, flour and Eggs**).

Activity Highlights:

- Conducted verification of invoices submitted to the Division;
- Regulated and monitored major commodities inventory such as, rice, petroleum products and cement to avoid shortage on the local market;
- Published Weekly Market Report of five major commodities (Rice, Petroleum Cement, flour and eggs);
- Published monthly petroleum products price update and
- Published Commerce Today Price Bulletins.

- Published nine (9) editions of Commerce Today, a monthly trade bulletin, which summarizes trade pricing and inventory data on rice, petroleum products;

- Published ten (10) monthly petroleum circulars;

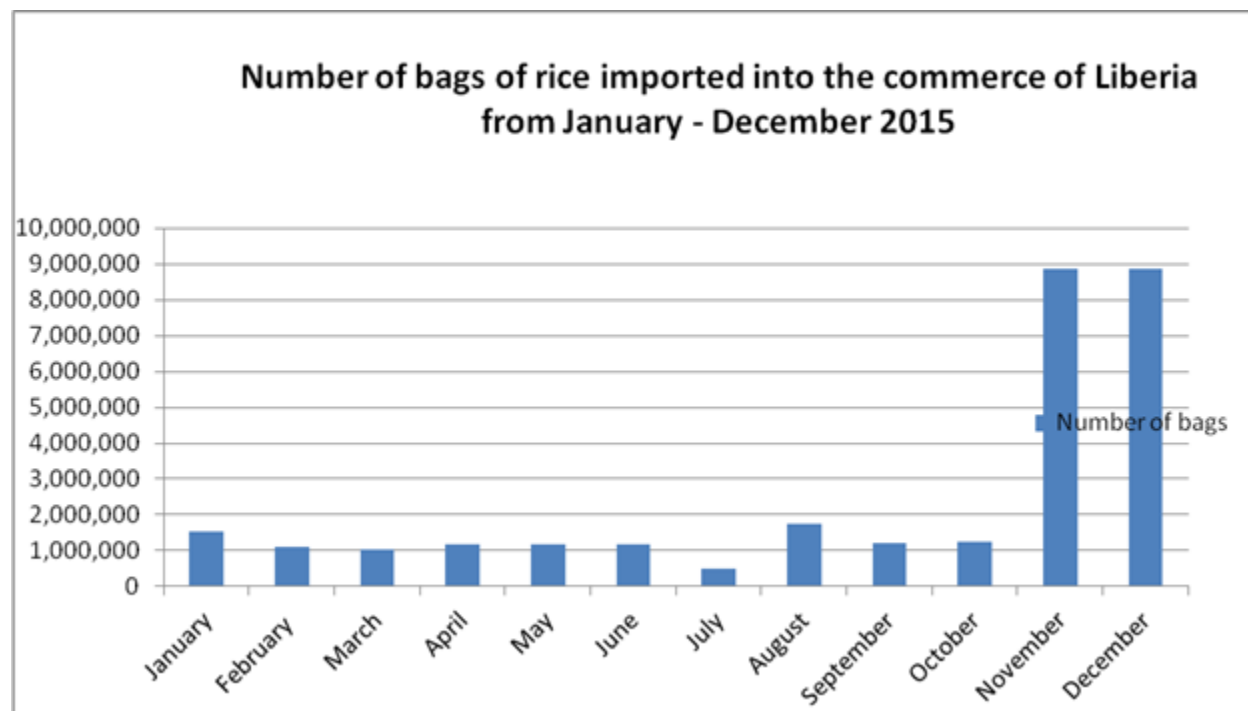
- Completed forty-eight (48) editions of the Weekly Market Report;

- Worked with the Ministry of Transport to publish the reduced National Transportation Fair for urban areas;

Commodity Profiles (Essential Commodities) (2015)**Rice**

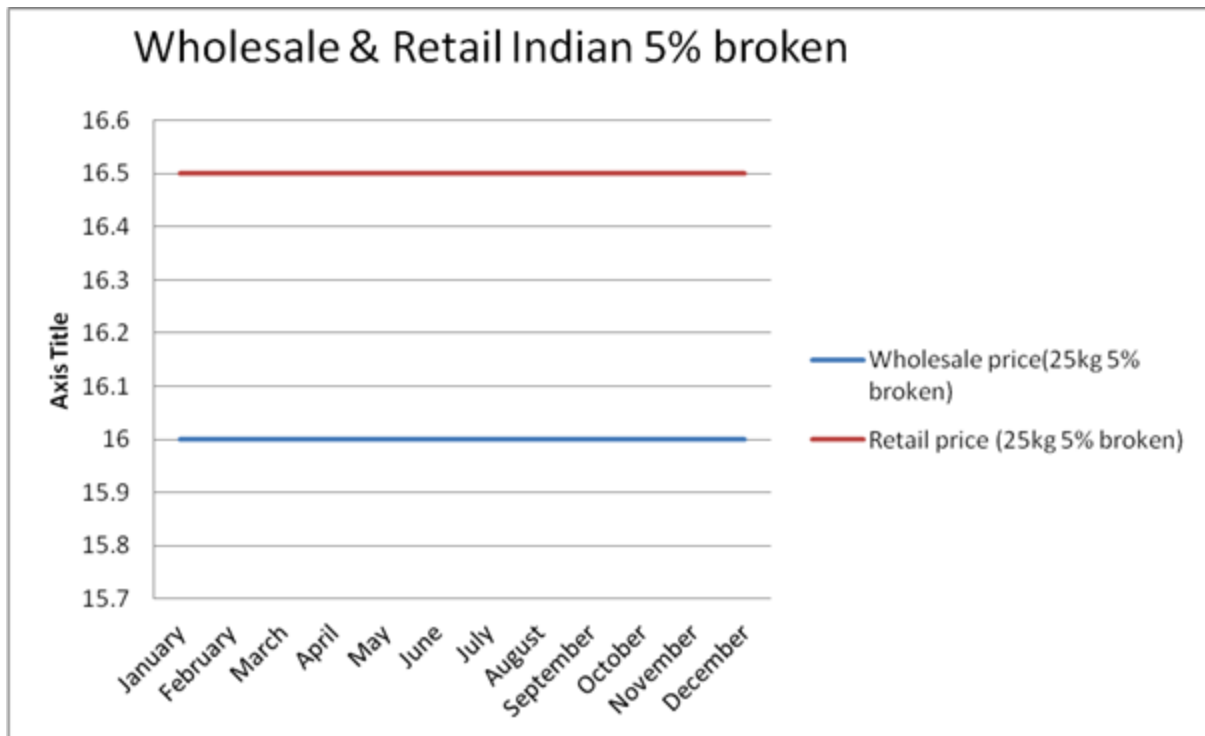
During the year under review, the rice market has maintained four major importers with three months buffer stock in the country throughout 2015. However, in the mist of few importers, the price of rice has remained relatively stable in the range of USD 14.50-16.50 respectively.

From January-December 2015, the market experienced the total importation of ten million four hundred fifteen thousand three twenty four **(10,415,324)**25KG bags into the Commerce of Liberia which represent an increase of 5.08% importation compared to 2014 and will last up to April 19, 2016.

Figure 1: Graph depicting rice importation statistics from Jan -Dec. 2015**Figure 2: Graph Depicting Prices of Indian Parboiled 5% Rice (25Kg) Jan-Dec. 2015**

The price of rice imported into the commerce of Liberia
From January – December 2015

MONTH	Wholesale price(25kg 5% broken)	Retail price (25kg 5% broken)
January	USD16.00	USD16.50
February	USD16.00	USD16.50
March	USD16.00	USD16.50
April	USD16.00	USD16.50
May	USD16.00	USD16.50
June	USD16.00	USD16.50
July	USD16.00	USD16.50
August	USD16.00	USD16.50
September	USD16.00	USD16.50
October	USD16.00	USD16.50
November	USD16.00	USD16.50
December	USD16.00	USD16.50



Note: There has been no stock of Indian Parboiled 5% Broken in 50Kg since July 2015.

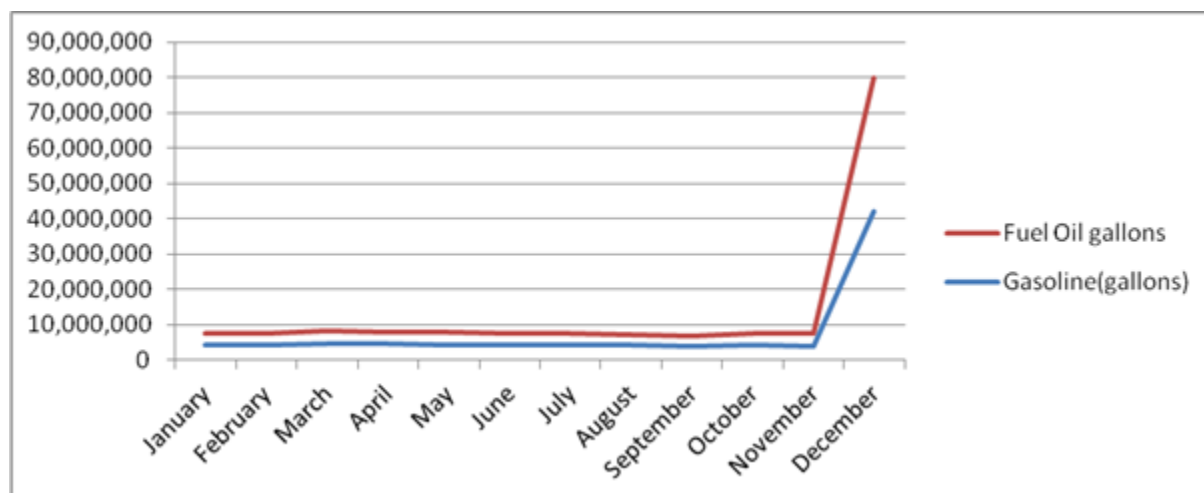
Petroleum Products:

One of the Division of Price Analysis and Marketing key responsibilities is the monitoring and regulating of petroleum products stock and prices on the local market. The increase and decrease of price fluctuation of the petroleum products are based on the Mediterranean Oversea Platts that determines the International FOB Value. Also, changes of the Liberian Dollar are determined by the Central Bank's exchange rate of the month. During the year under review, a total of eleven circular on petroleum prices were published by the Division on the local market in collaboration with LPRC to determine the price of petroleum products for the month.

The Division also took inventory on the stock data of products imported into the commerce of Liberia from January to December 2015. The total of Forty-seven million five hundred eighty nine thousand (**47,589,000**) gallons of MOGAS and Thirty eight million one hundred seventy seven thousand five hundred (**38,177,500**) gallons of GASOIL were imported into the commerce of Liberia.

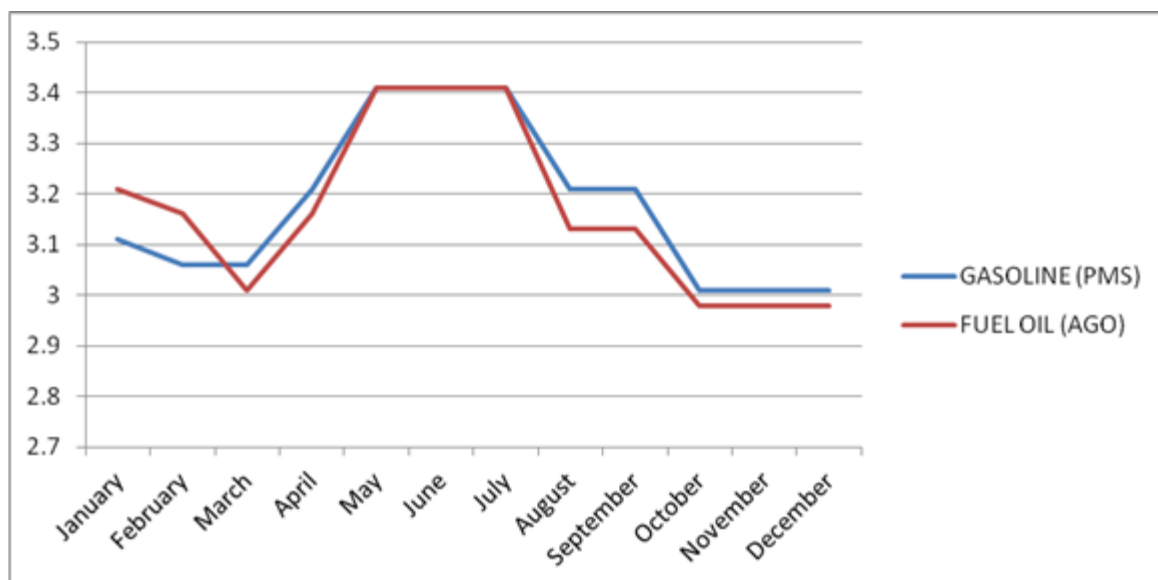
Figure 4: Graph Depicting Petroleum Products Import Statistics Jan-Dec.2015

**GALLONS OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
IMPORTED INTO THE COMMERCE OF LIBERIA
FROM January-DECEMBER 2015**

**Figure 5: Graph and table below Depict Prices of Petroleum Products Jan-Dec. 2015**

**THE PRICES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS ON THE LOCAL
MARKET FROM JANUARY – DECEMBER 2015**

MONTH	GASOLINE (PMS)	FUEL OIL (AGO)
January	USD3.11	USD3.21
February	USD3.06	USD3.16
March	USD3.06	USD3.01
April	USD3.21	USD3.16
May	USD3.41	USD3.41
June	USD3.41	USD3.41
July	USD3.41	USD3.41
August	USD3.21	USD3.13
September	USD3.21	USD3.13
October	USD3.01	USD2.98
November	USD3.01	USD2.98
December	USD3.01	USD2.98



Cement:

The cement market in Liberia has two major players, CEMENCO and Fouta Corporation. CEMENCO manufactures locally while Fouta Corporation imports finished product.

However, despite few dealers of cement on the local market, the wholesale price of the product has been relatively stable at USD 7.85 while retail price remains USD 8.50 with sufficient supply on the local market.

The cement market has experienced a total importation of two million eight hundred eighty thousand (2,880,000 bags) with monetary value of eleven million one hundred ninety-one thousand (USD 11,191,000) United States Dollar with local production of 282,354mt or 5,647,080 (50Kg bags) respectively.

Figure 5: Graph and table below Depict Locally produced cement volumes and imported cement volumes Jan-Dec.2015

Imported Cement (Fouta Corporation)

Date	Total MT	Bags (50Kg)	CIF value USD
February	36,000	720,000	2,898,000.00
May	36,000	720,000	2,898,000.00
July	35,000	700,000	2,695,000.00
December	37,000	740,000	2,700,000.00
TOTAL	144,000	2,880,000	11,191,000

Locally Produced Cement (CEMENCO)

Date	Total MT	Bags (50Kg)
January	32,828	656,560
February	26,701.15	534,023
March	30,800	616,000
April	31,850	637,000
May	33,400	668,000
June	23,750	475,000
July	22,050	441,000
August	19,950	399,000
September	16,380	327,600
October	18,155	363,100
November	16,789.90	335,798
December	9,700	194,000
TOTAL	282,354	5,647,080

Figure 6: Graph Depicting Price of Cement Jan-Dec. 2015**4.5 Liberia Business Registry (LBR)****Overview**

The Liberia Business Registry was established to function as a modern registry which would assist in the reduction of time and costs of registration of economic operators and start-ups. Since its commencement of operations, it has not only served as an efficient point of revenue collection but also a valuable source of some economic statistics. The registry has the potential to be expanded into a civil registry and, when de-centralized to the various counties will be a great asset to the central government. The Liberia Business Registry (LBR) is a One-Stop-Shop that functions under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The LBR has been

jointly established in partnership with other Government of Liberia (GOL) Ministries / Agencies that have been involved in enterprise formalization processes. They are as follows:

- ✓ Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- ✓ Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ✓ Ministry of Finance
- ✓ Central Bank of Liberia
- ✓ National Social Security & Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP)

The LBR is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the processes of enterprise formalization in Liberia.

Accordingly, it performs the authorization, incorporation and registration of every domestic corporation, reregistered corporation or re-domiciled corporation and every foreign corporation seeking authority for a place of business within the commerce of Liberia. For detail, the LBR authorizes, incorporates and registers any of the below listed enterprise types:

- Limited Liability Corporations
- Not-for-Profit Corporations
- Partnerships
- Limited Partnerships
- Trusts
- Foundations
- Foreign Corporations
- Foreign Maritime Entities (in consultation with the Liberia Maritime Authority)
- Business Corporations
- Sole-Proprietorships, and
- Reservation of Business Names

LBR also ensures that all business establishments conform to the domestic trade regulations of Liberia as relates formalization. Hence, it also regulates, controls, coordinates, promotes, and develops the domestic commerce of Liberia.

Activity Highlights

The business registry has undergone a complete IT upgrade, which has further improved the business registration process and further shortens the time it takes to register a business. All modalities have been put in place to ensure the launch in February 2016 of a mobile business registration campaign to provide business registration services to businesses situated in rural Liberia.

STATISTICAL CHARTS

This section has charts that provide important statistics, using the data collected by the LBR.

Chart 1: LBR 2016 Annual Report

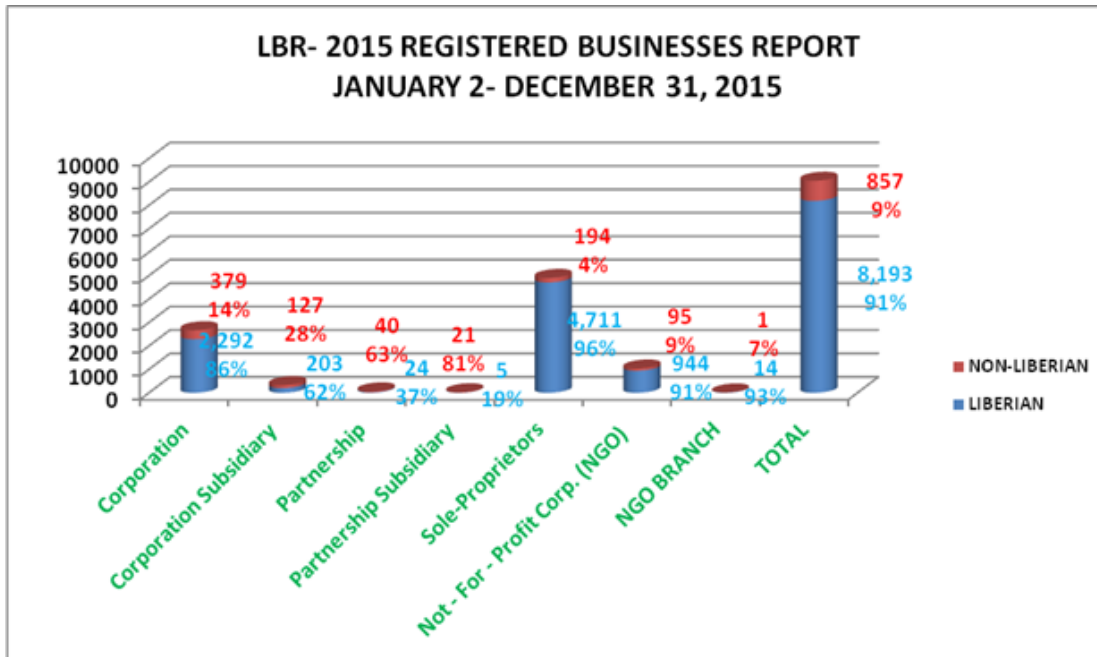


Chart 2: LBR 2016 New Businesses Report

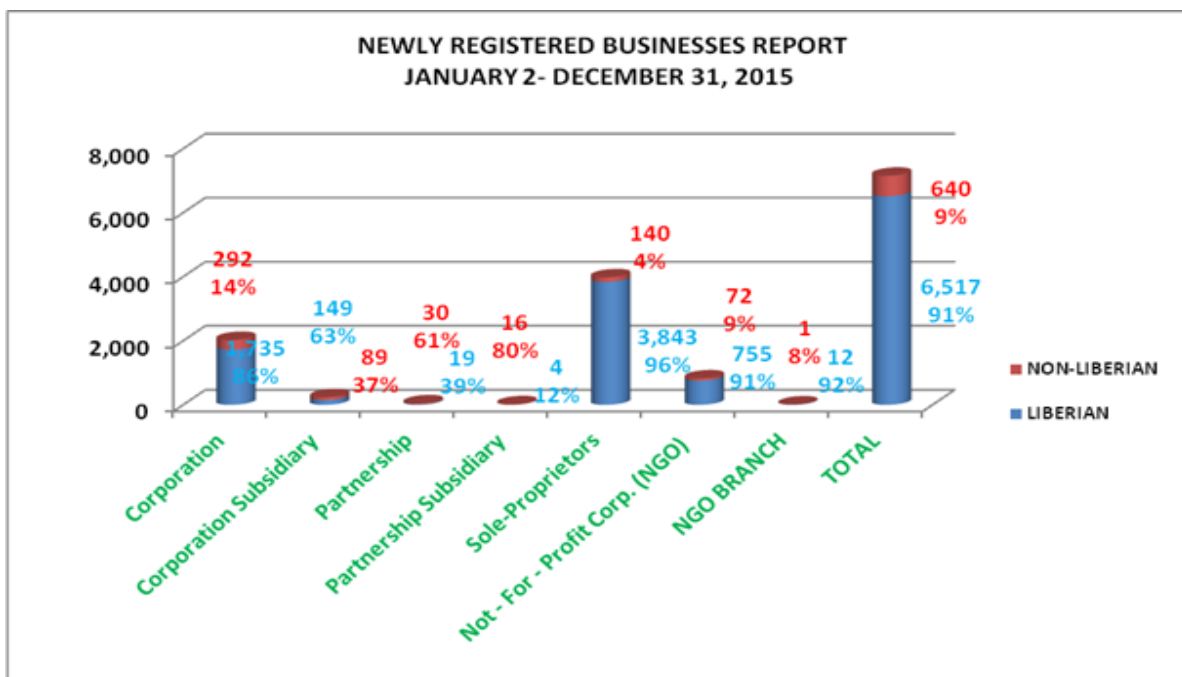


Chart 2 as shown specifically references the registration of new businesses both Liberian and Non-Liberian.

Chart 3: LBR 2016 Existing Businesses Report

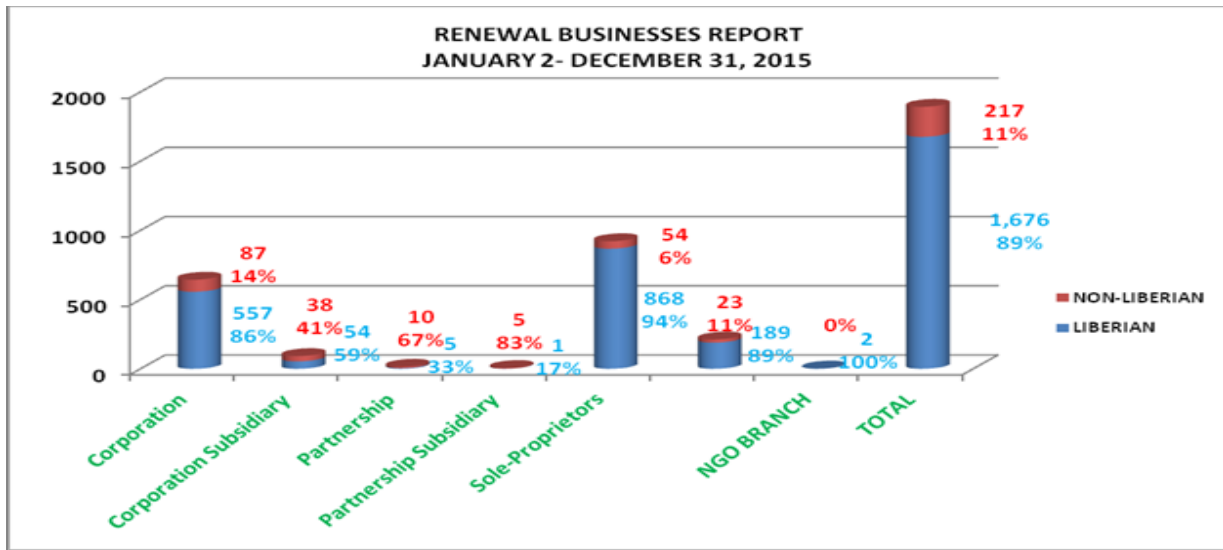


Chart 3 as shown specifically references the renewal of registration by businesses both Liberian and Non-Liberian.

Chart 4: Summary Report for Liberian-Owned Businesses

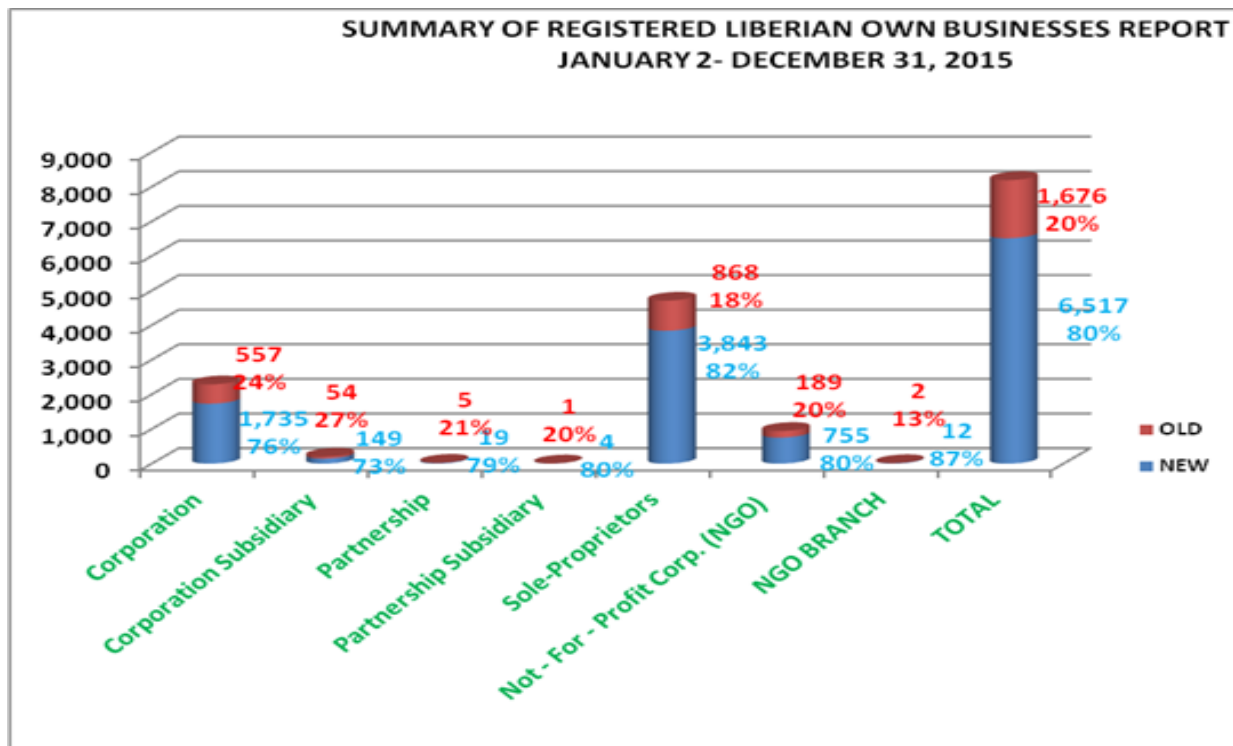


Chart 4 as shown above, indicates specifically registration of Liberian businesses according to their status (new/renewed).

Chart 5: Summary Report for Non-Liberian-Owned Businesses

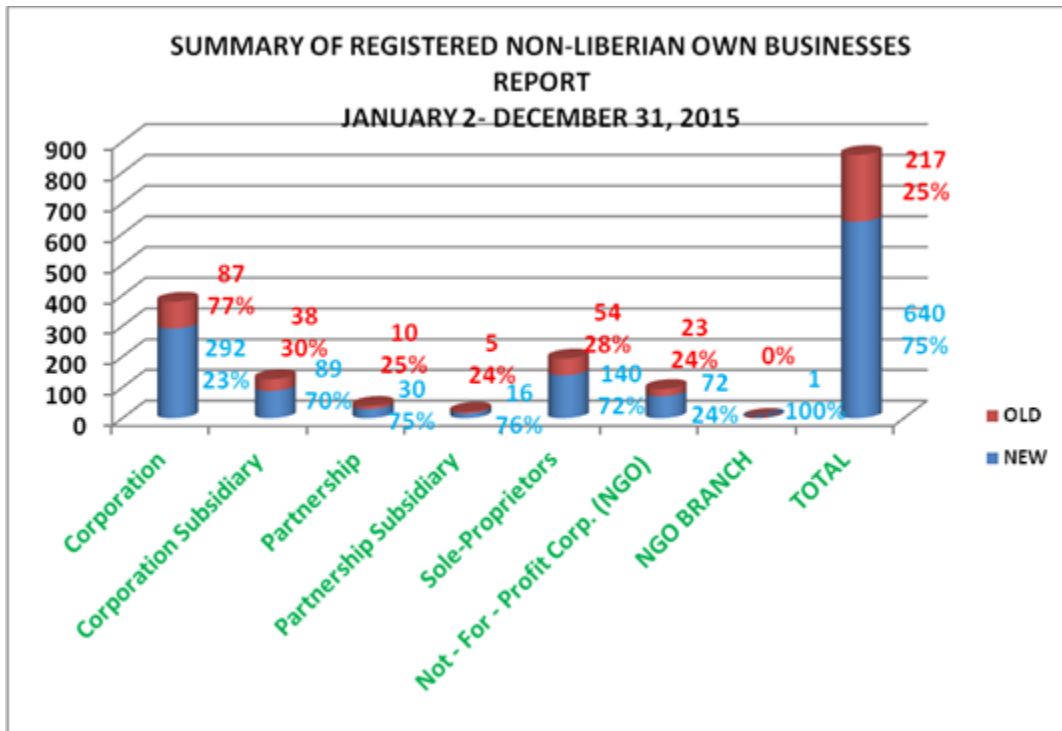


Chart 5 as shown above, indicates specifically registration of Non-Liberian businesses according to their status (new/renewed).

Chart 6: Revenue Generated (USD)

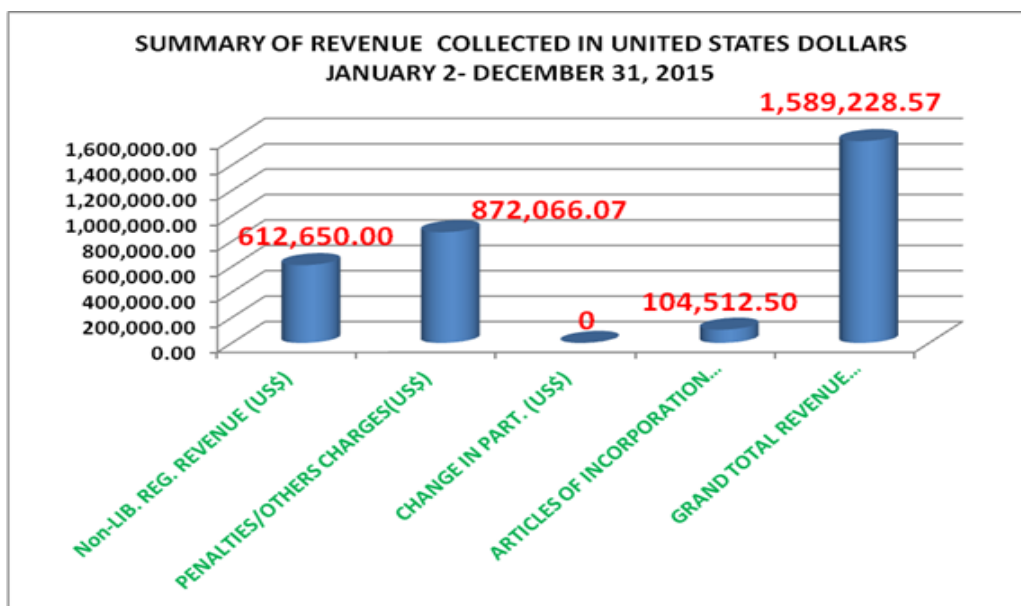


Chart 6 as shown above, indicates specifically revenue raised in United States Dollars per their various sources.

Chart 7: Revenue Generated (LD)

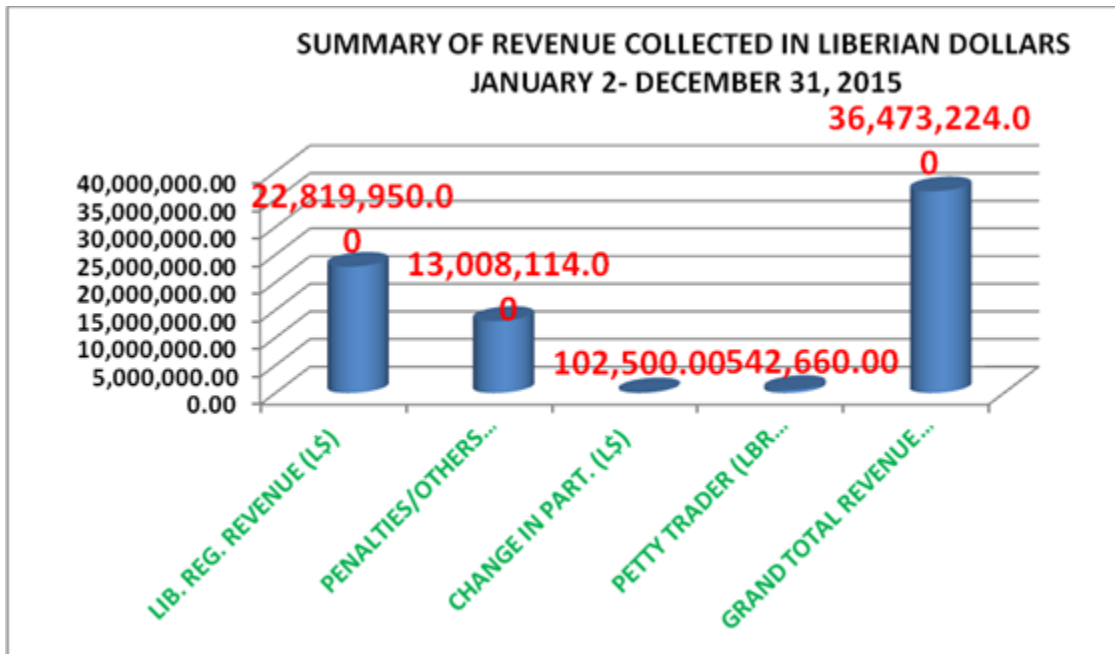


Chart 7 as shown above, indicates specifically revenue raised in Liberian Dollars per their various sources.

Chart 8: Ownership by Gender

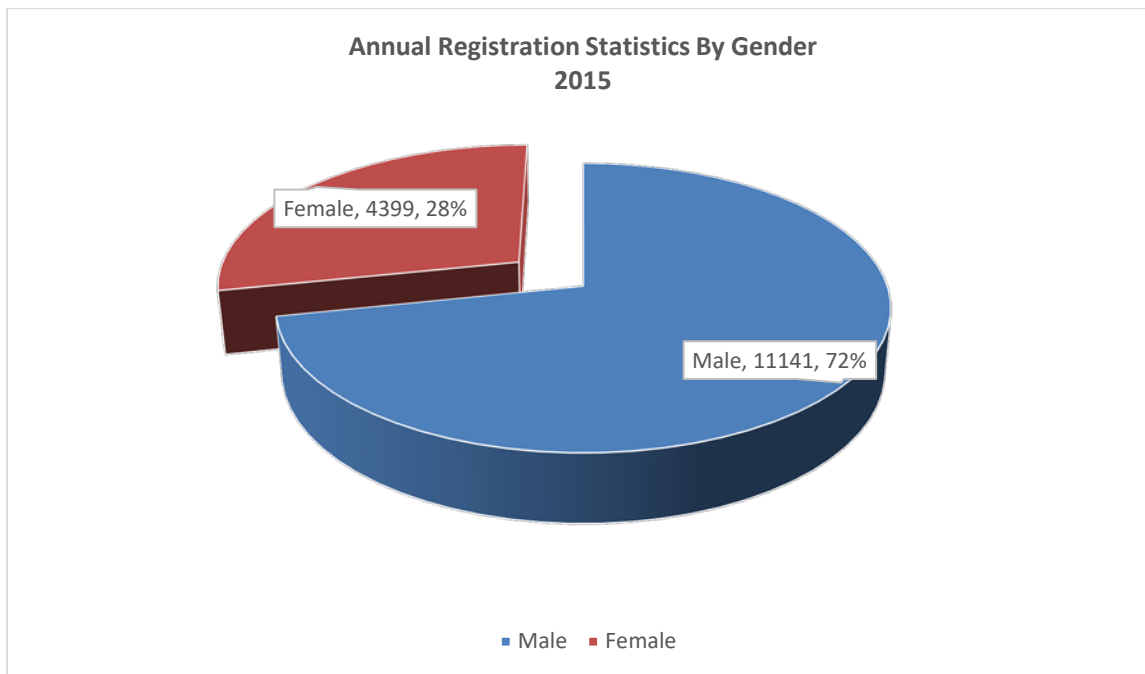


Chart 13 as shown above, indicates statistics based on ownership by gender during the 2015 registration period.

4.6 Division of Consumer Education and Protection (CEPD)

Overview

The Division of Consumer Education & Protection is charged with the responsibility of educating consumers of, and, protecting them from trade malpractices. Its programs inform consumers of their rights to redress and, information that should be provided on various products such that they are empowered to make informed choices.

Activity Highlights

- Conducted public awareness campaign (urban & rural)
- Prepared Standard Operation Procedure Manual
- Hosted talk shows on consumerism and consumer protection
- Hosted workshops for Consumer Education

5.0 BUREAU OF INDUSTRIAL SERVICES



Hon. Ellen O. Pratt

Deputy Minister for Industry & Inspector-General, R.L.

5.1 Introduction

The Bureau of Industry is the largest bureau within the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and the engine of industrial development in Liberia. We have an ambitious mandate, to strengthen and promote industrial development in a post-conflict LDC.

Despite the challenges faced within the sector, the opportunity exists to lead a team of dedicated individuals who can leave a lasting legacy and build upon the Ministry's transformative agenda.

I joined the MOCI team in August of 2015. In my capacity as DMI, I am pleased to share the progress made. The second quarter technical and general inspections exercises were conducted as per the Investment code 2010. Inspectors were tasked to verify that the "Liberianization" Policy, which sets aside certain categories of businesses, was being enforced.

The Bureau has also, for the first time, revised the fines and fees schedule as per the General Business Law and provided defined categories of fines. This is a direct implementation of the Inspections Reform Process and these fines are being utilized in the third quarter inspections, scheduled for Feb 2016.

The Bureau also welcomes the ambitious task of heading the capital infrastructure projects designated to MOCI, which are highlighted below. We are pleased to lead this effort and present completed Presidential projects within the next 12-18 months.

Specific to capacity development, as DMI I am pleased to have initiated Liberia's membership in the India-Africa Cotton Technical Exchange Program, which provides a platform for Liberians in

the textile industry to participate in learning exchanges with counterparts in India. This is a formidable step in Liberia's industrialization process as we expand and promote the sector.

5.2 Overview

The Bureau of Industry was established in June 1962 by an Act of the Liberia Legislature. As the primary architect for the advancement of industrial development in Liberia, the Bureau monitors, regulates, promotes, and facilitates the growth, development and expansion of the industrial sector in Liberia.

The Bureau also has oversight for adopting, developing and implementing standard regulations, conducting general and technical inspections enforcement, in compliance with the General Business Law, and coordinating programs with donor partners such as: The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), CODEX and International Standard Organization (ISO) in Liberia.

As part of its mandate to facilitate the development of the industrial sector of Liberia, the Bureau of Industry promotes good manufacturing practices (GMP) and monitors compliance of industrial establishments with standards operating procedures. It also collects and compiles industrial statistics on existing and functional industries operating in the commerce of Liberia.

The bureau currently comprises four (4) divisions: Division of Industrial Development & Compliance Support, Division of Standards, Division of Inspectorate and the National Standard Laboratory.

Activity Highlights

- **Lofa Women's Weaving Center:** In February 2016 construction will begin for the Lofa Women Weaving Center, in Kolahun, Lofa County. This will be a 3,000-square-foot facility equipped with modern equipment, including power and industrial hand looms required to expand the Liberian country cloth textile industry. As a component of the Ministry's initiative to boost the sector, we have also applied to join the India-Africa Cotton Technical Exchange Program which links cotton growers and weavers in Africa with counterparts in India and provides intensive learning exchanges to promote development along the sector's value chain.
- **Expansion of the "Liberian Marketplace" Trade Store:** The Ministry is currently implementing a project to expand the marketplace and relocate the existing (3rd Street) site to the top floor of the Nancy Doe Market. This expansion will also provide the opportunity to showcase Liberian produce through a farmer's market concept, which will be located on the grounds of the market.

- Three (3) comprehensive industrial development studies were conducted: The Industrial Sector Analysis, Labor Productivity Linking Industrial Skills to Development and Simplifying Entry for Industrial Investments in Liberia. These studies provide an in-depth analysis of Liberia's industrial sector and offer policy recommendations and guidelines to improve the regulatory environment and inform Government's decision making on the growth of the industrial development sector.
- Several regulations were drafted in 2015 and will be adopted into force in QTR1 2016, following the required stakeholder engagement process: Fines Regulation, Liberia Standards Board Regulation, Liquor Regulation, Water Manufacturing Regulation, Technical Guidelines and LPG Regulation.
- Chaired the Presidential Taskforce on Manufacturing and Business Support, and inter-ministerial committee created to develop priority actions that Government could implement to support private sector development in the industrial sector. The taskforce outlined thirteen (13) priority actions that can be executed within six (6) months to improve Liberia's doing business indicators and support the development of manufacturing and industrial development in Liberia.

5.3 Division of Inspectorate

Overview

The Inspectorate Division conducts tours within the business community for the purpose of ensuring that businesses comply and abide by the laws and regulations governing commerce and trade within the Republic of Liberia. Resulting from the introduction of an Inspection Regime, the Division coordinates inspections, with other relevant units/agencies, to curb irregularities and improprieties, such as hoarding, no price tagging, and non-compliance with regulations governing the sales of consumer goods and business registration and guidelines. As a result of reform measures implemented, Commerce inspectors now conduct quarterly targeted inspections, instead of weekly and ad-hoc. We are in the process of implementing an inspections harmonization structure which will further refine the inspections processes across the various agencies mandated with inspectorate functions.

The current inspection procedures incorporate checklists, inspections order, inspection notices and a clear notification to the public of the sectors that will be inspected. The Ministry has also introduced inspection guides under four key areas (Weights and Measures, Industry Inspections, Food and Safety, GMP, and Warehousing). These inspection guides are meant to identify and develop the capacity of technical inspectors. The Inspectorate is staffed with one hundred and

five (105) inspectors, in both urban centers rural areas, which includes four regional offices that conduct inspections in 14 counties.

Activity Highlights

- Revised the fines and fees schedule as per the General Business Law to mitigate prejudice in violation fines and improve transparency of the inspections process.
- Conducted two (2) general inspection exercises. The first focused on compliance with general business laws and business registration compliance. The second focused on Investment Code 2010 and inspected businesses in four sectors that are set-aside for Liberians.
- Organized a two-day workshop for Rural Inspectors in Gbarnga, Bong County to educate Inspectors on the inspection procedures.
- Division participation in the decentralization platform and training in Bong County on February 15, 2015.
- Seized 710 cartons and 119 bags of expired relief food items at the Freeport of Monrovia.

5.4 Division of Standards

Overview

The Division of Standards, during the period under review, developed and implemented required regulations and policies in keeping with its mandate and made efforts to ensure that acceptable quality and standard of goods are maintained in the commerce of Liberia. To this end, the below listed activities were implemented.

Activity Highlights:

- With technical support from the **West Africa Quality System Program** (funded by EU and implemented by UNIDO) the division produced and validated the **National Quality Policy**, with participation of both private and public stakeholders. This policy establishes basis for development of Liberia's quality infrastructure to facilitate trade.
- Established Technical Committee on CODEX and adopted fifteen (15) international standards additional to our existing National Standards;
- Published technical regulations on flour & service stations;
- Drafting below regulations to enhance the regulatory framework to address the presence of substandard products on the Liberian market for:
 - Liquefied petroleum gas
 - Fortified Wheat Flour
 - Packaged Water Products-Sachet Water
- Developed Industrial and Food Safety Inspection Guides.

5.5 National Standards Laboratory

Overview

The establishment of the National Standards Laboratory (NSL) as a quality infrastructure is a significant step towards fulfilling GoL's commitment to ensure technical and quality services to trade, health and safety in Liberia. The NSL is also a framework to strengthen quality infrastructure to support competitiveness, harmonization of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytol-Sanitary (SPS) measures in West Africa. While enhancing Liberia's drive to meet the World Trade Organization post-accession obligations, a strengthened SPS system will improve our export profile and capacity to prevent the importation of sub-standard products as well as provide assurances that our agriculture exports meet international standards.

Activity Highlights:

- The BOI completed the formation of the Technical Committee on Inquiry Point and National Notification Authority/TBT & WTO and completed the adoption of fifteen international standards to national standards and established a technical committee on CODEX.
- A draft National Quality Policy has been produced as a result of program activities implemented by UNIDO (with funding from EU) under the West Africa Quality System Program.
- Completed product confirmative assessment regime for water industry and verification inspection guides for building materials (zinc and steel rods) and industrial and commercial scales. Implementation of technical inspections to commence QTR1 2016.
- Conducted verification and calibration exercises at sixty-three (63) gas stations
- Generated a total of USD33,313-00 during the period under review of which USD5,925-00 were fees for testing services; USD26,500-00 from calibration and USD888-00 generated from technical services (including training).

5.6 Division of Industrial Development and Compliance Support (DID&CS)

Overview

The Division of Industrial Development and Compliance Support was established in 2010 as a result of the merging of the Division of Industrial Development and Industrial Administration and Supervision, for the purpose of coordinating and supervising the activities of various industrial sectors operating in Liberia. Previously, the two Divisions served as the policy development unit and the industrial monitoring and statistics unit formulating, supervising,

evaluating, and monitoring policies necessary for the implementation of Government industrial regulations.

The Division performs the following activities based on three pillars: 1. Legal Regulatory Reform; 2. Human capacity building; and 3. Infrastructure Development, as well as other relevant activities such as to implement Industrial Policy and Safety Regulations through monitoring and evaluation.

Activity Highlights:

- Completed Directory coding on major Industrial establishments operating in the commerce of Liberia
- Drafted Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Regulations on Cement, Plastic Materials, non-alcoholic beverages and foods;
- Organized internal training for industrial technicians' data interpretation.
- Collaborated with UNIDO through the Japanese Government for the implementation of the KUMATSU program. The project will train three hundred Liberians in heavy duty machinery, welding maintenance operation and electricity. The first fifty (50) students graduated from the program on August 15, 2015.

6.0 BUREAU OF SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Andrew G. Paygar-Flangiah, Sr.,
Deputy Minister for Small Business Administration

6.1 Overview

Overview

The Bureau of Small Business Administration (SBA) was established by the passage of the Small Business Empowerment Act by the National Legislature in December 2014 within the Ministry of Commerce & Industry to “encourage and promote the establishment, growth and expansion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)” by helping them get access to finance, market, capacity development and training as well as create the enabling legal and regulatory environment. The Bureau replaced the erstwhile MSME Division and its establishment was in keeping with the need for an institutional mechanism that would provide a more coordinated and targeted support small businesses in the country.

Shortly after its establishment, Her Excellency, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, appointed Hon. Andrew G. Paygar-Flangiah and Hon. Pewee S. Reed, as Deputy and Assistant Ministers of the Bureau, respectively. Then in January 2015, the Bureau began organizational work to facilitate the implementation of the core mandate of the Bureau, which is to monitor and report on the implementation of the 25% public procurement “set aside” law for Liberian-Owned MSMEs as provided for in the Act.

6.2 Activity Highlights

During the period under review the Bureau achieved the following:

- **Monitoring SBA 25% Procurement “Set Aside”**
 - ✓ Developed MACs forms to track government institutions compliance with the 25% public procurement “set aside”

- ✓ Held stakeholders' validation meeting and validated MACS Forms and uploaded forms on SBA website
- ✓ Held first Inter-Agency Steering Committee
- ✓ Held Awareness Workshop with SMEs and partners on the 25% Public Procurement Law
- ✓ Produced first semester report on 25% set-aside compliance. Highlights of this report:
 - Total number of approved procurement plans as at December 31, 2015 is 75
 - Total value of procurement plans approved as at December 31, 2015 is \$233,218,468.00
 - Total value of SBA approved plans as at December 31, 2015 is US\$69,435.816
 - Total number of government institutions that executed SBA contracts as at December 31, 2015 is 21, with value amounting to US\$8,655,323
 - Total number of Liberian-Owned small businesses benefiting from SBA contracts as at December 31, 2015 is 93
 - Highest beneficiary of SBA executed contracts as at December 31, 2015 was Aminata & Sons, in the amount of US\$3,782,974.00, representing 43.7% of total execution
- **Other Activity Highlights**
 - Organized, planned and hosted the 3rd annual National SBA MSME Conference.
 - Over 670 registered participants convened over two days from November 17-18, 2015
 - Conference and trade fair featured 50 MSME exhibitors
 - Seven panel discussions on policy topics ranging from MSME taxation to WTO accession
 - The E+ First Class, a two-year MoCI and IFC co-sponsored MSME empowerment program designed to promote youth entrepreneurship through training and access to finance launched
 - Registered **555** new MSMEs, thereby moving this number of petty traders from the informal to formal sector while generating new revenues of **LD\$1,068,600** in 2015.
 - launched an SBA website which introduces the SBA to the public and serves as a platform for SBA communications and marketing
 - Developed SBA brochures (available online) and set up an SBA Facebook page.

The following divisions within the Bureau were operationalized as mandated by the Small Business Empowerment Act which created the Bureau of Small Business Administration.

6.3 Division of Access to Finance

The main role of this division is to work with designated financial institutions to design targeted loans products for and facilitate the provision of such loan products to Liberian-Owned MSMEs at affordable interest rates and with reasonable terms and conditions that will enable them to expand and grow. Additionally, the division is supposed to conduct periodic research relative challenges faced by MSMEs in their ability to access finance and recommend practical solutions

to address the challenges, develop various access to finance brochures, training manuals and conduct training for MSMEs. The division is headed by a Director.

6.4 Division of Access to Markets

The mandate of the Division of Access to Markets is to help Liberian-Owned MSMEs explore market opportunities both locally and internationally to enable them to bring their products/services to the marketplace. The division must conduct periodic market research with the view of identifying challenges in the marketplace and finding workable solutions thereto, developing brochures, training manuals and conducting training for MSMEs. The division is headed by a Director.

6.5 Division of Capacity Development & Performance Monitoring

The Division of Capacity Development & Performance Monitoring is the data collection and monitoring arm of the Bureau in respect of government institutions compliance with the 25% procurement law. It is responsible to track and report every quarter on government institutions execution of 25% procurement “set aside” in respect of a given fiscal year. The division is headed by a Director.

6.6 Information Communications and Technology Unit

The ICT Unit was created by the Ministry to more effectively meet the ICT needs of the newly-formed SBA. Its functions are:

- Develop, deploy and maintain a database for registering Liberian small businesses with the SBA;
- Receive and compile information regarding the execution of the 25% “set-aside” mandate as specified in the SBE Act. This information should be presented for approval to the Deputy Minister;
- Develop, deploy and maintain the SBA website. This includes developing all website content, i.e. pictures, videos, forms, etc., as well as keeping all content up-to-date to improve awareness;
- Develop promotional items such as brochures, forms, billboards, etc. to increase awareness;
- Liaise with the Division of ITSS to meet any and all IT needs of the Bureau.

The Unit is headed by a Coordinator.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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