



# Ministry of Commerce & Industry

## Annual Report 2016



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



## FOREWORD



Minister of Commerce and Industry

Honorable members of the 53rd National legislature, I present to you with great honor highlights, progress and achievements at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) covering the period January 1-December 31, 2016.

Two years after the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak and resulting health care crisis in Liberia that dramatically plunged our country's GDP from 8.7% to 0.3%, Liberia's GDP for 2016 is projected at 3.2%. Liberia is recovering from the economic impact of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and a fall in the prices of our major exports (Rubber and Iron Ore) on the global market and the drawdown of UNMIL. I am delighted to report that we've made significant achievements in drafting and publishing the national tourism and rubber wood strategies as major deliverables under the Liberia Post Accession Implementation Plan (LPAP).

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.

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.

In July 2016, Liberia joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the 163<sup>rd</sup> member after successful completion of negotiations on market access in three working party meetings with WTO member states in Geneva, Switzerland. Liberia's membership was approved by Ministers of WTO member states on 16 December 2015 at the WTO 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference, held in Nairobi Kenya. Hence, a WTO post accession plan has been developed, launched and shared

with potential donors to guide the implementation process for WTO compliance and competitiveness.

As part of Liberia's Post Accession Activities, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with ITC, developed and launched the Tourism Strategy and tourism website and made progress in the development of the Kpatawee Waterfall.

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 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.

I am pleased to report the successful hosting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MSME Conference and Trade Fair under the theme: **From Vision to Implementation-Buying Liberian, Building Liberia** with focus on **“Promoting Women Entrepreneurship for Economic Empowerment”**. As part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's efforts to empower youth innovation, US\$100,000 was given to 10 startup Liberian businesses from the **LIFE FUND** while eight (8) SMEs won various awards (cash/kind) for their outstanding performances at the conference.

With the support of the 53<sup>rd</sup> National Legislature, the Ministry was able to enact and ratify the Intellectual Property (IP) Law, The Liberia WTO Accession Protocol and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) instruments (Conventions, Treaties and Protocols).

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 overarching goal of the SPIU 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 while we await a peaceful transition of Administration in the coming year. A special acknowledgement goes to my team as well as the National Legislature and 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 plays a pivotal role in 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. Once again, thanks for your usual support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Axel M. Addy', is written over a horizontal line.

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  
53<sup>rd</sup> National Legislature  
Capitol Hill, Capitol Building  
Republic of Liberia  
Monrovia, Liberia

#### **RE: SUBMISSION OF 2016 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, 2016. 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 54<sup>th</sup> 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

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## 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 review of activities and goals set out in the MoCI Strategic Plan has been undertaken by a consultant, provided through the kind assistance of the UNDP, to make a final assessment of what was achieved during the period up to November 2016. The review process entailed the identification of key indicators relative to the goals/result areas highlighted in the Strategic Plan, namely, (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. We are pleased to report that initial assessment indicated that MoCI was successful in achieving 90% of the targets set in the Strategic Plan. Targets that were not fully achieved will be undertaken in the following

year in preparation for the development of another strategic plan in which future deliverables will be incorporated.

## 2.5 Executive Summary

In the execution of its statutory mandate, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has herein set out a report on the state of the Country's commerce and trade activities for the year 2016. The rebranding process coupled with the implementation of policy reforms has paid dividends by providing the requisite framework for achieving our deliverables and enhancing service delivery to the public. This Executive Summary highlights the major accomplishments by the Ministry in the execution of its mandate during the period January- December 2016.

After a series of meetings conducting negotiations for accession to the WTO, Liberia finally became a full (163<sup>rd</sup>) member of the World Trade Organization in 2016. This notable achievement was followed by several activities in support thereof, to include a Roundtable Meeting and the launching of Liberia's Post Accession Plan. Towards further multilateral trade integration, Liberia also participated in the first three (3) rounds of the Continental Free Trade Area – Negotiation Forum (CFTA-NF) aimed at establishing a Free Trade Area among AU Member States.

Within the period under review the MoCI can also boast the development and launching of a National Tourism Strategy component of the National Export Strategy. Also, in furtherance of the desire to boost Liberia's export potential, a Rubberwood Furniture Trade Strategy was also developed.

Other achievements are, the successful hosting of the MSME Conference and Trade Fair and, the hosting of the Ministerial Meeting of the West African Monetary Zone in Monrovia (Nov. 2016). A summary of Bureau activities below, further highlight achievements of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry for the year 2016.

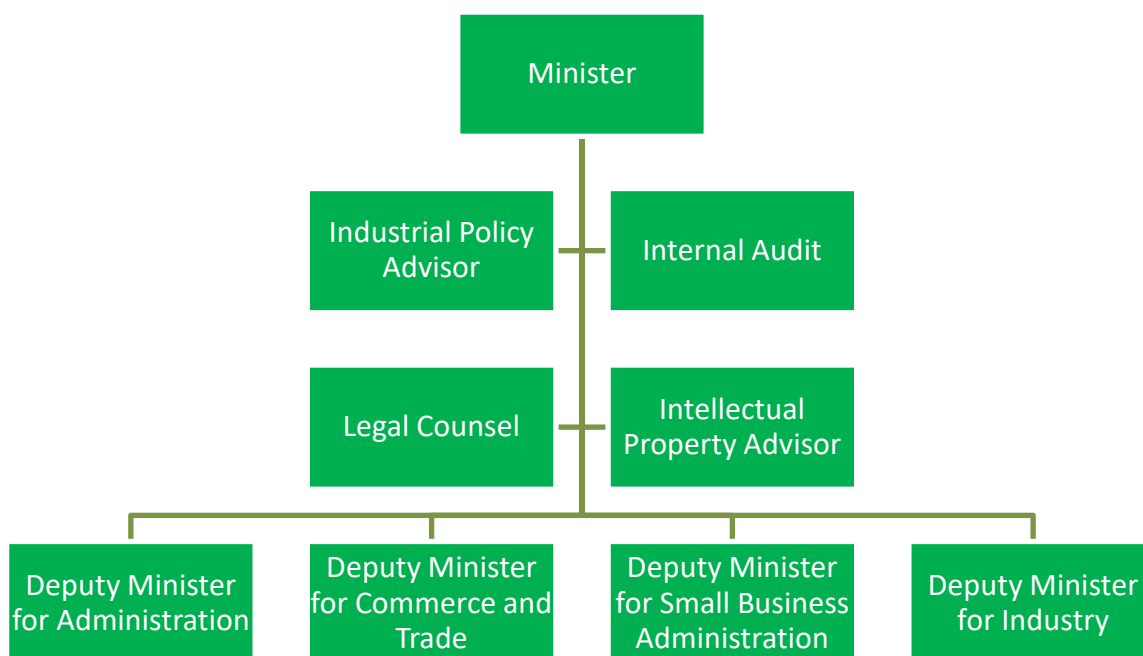
- **Bureau of Administration** accomplishments this year included the completion of its Mandate Function Review, in support of the Government of Liberia's Public-Sector Reform initiative and strengthening of logistic capacity to support activities in the rural areas. Following Liberia's accession to the WTO, the Bureau of Administration provided support for the development of a Post Accession Plan as well as support needed for the passage of the Foreign Trade, Competition and Intellectual Property Laws, respectively. During the period under review, the Bureau also made provisions for the establishment of Mobile Business Registration and commenced the securing of the area designated to be the Industrial Park by the erection of a perimeter fence.
- **Bureau of Small Business Administration (SBA)**, which was recently formed with the mandate to support MSME development, proudly reports the successful hosting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MSME Conference and Trade Fair (2016). Young Liberian innovators and

entrepreneurs took advantage of the opportunity to showcase their abilities and products as well as win valuable cash prizes. The Bureau also monitored the implementation of the SBA 25% Procurement Law; expanded the Liberian Market Place (now relocated to the Nancy B. Doe/ Jorkpen Town Market), with provisions for a farmer's market – available 2<sup>nd</sup> & last Saturday of each month. The SBA also awarded a contract for the construction of the Lofa Women Weaving Center which is expected to be inaugurated in 2017.

- **Bureau of Commerce and Trade** coordinated the activities leading to Liberia becoming a full WTO Member during the period under review. In support of this, the bureau conducted a “needs assessment”, launched a WTO Post Accession Plan and secured assistance to build institutional and human capacity for Liberia's effective and successful participation in the multilateral trade arena. To further enhance service delivery, the restructuring of some divisions within the Bureau were carried out. Further, a one-stop trade facilitation hub was established at the Roberts International Airport. Also, a WTO Unit was established for the implementation of the Post Accession Plan. A National Trade Facilitation Committee, comprising of the public and private sectors, has also been established to support the multilateral trade integration initiative.
- **Bureau of Industrial Services** – In 2016, the Bureau of Industrial Services, which also includes the Inspectorate, made several interventions to enhance industrial promotion and development as well as ensuring compliance to national regulations and standards. In line with this effort, the Technical Committees on Enquiry Point and National Notification Authority for TBT & WTO and on Codex were established. Additionally, fifteen (15) international standards, to complement existing national standards, were adopted. With regards to regulations and policy development, the bureau, through the West Africa Quality System Program and funding from UNIDO and the EU, produced and validated the Quality Policy. This Policy will contribute to the development of Liberia's quality infrastructure to enhance trade facilitation. The regulatory framework for the production of liquefied petroleum gas, fortified wheat flour and packaged (sachet) water were drafted, in addition to the publishing of technical regulations on flour and service stations. In collaboration with UNIDO, the 2nd phase of Komatsu Training Program was started with 200 recruits to be trained in basic hydraulics, excavator operation and general maintenance. Again, with support from UNIDO, a Research & Training Center to enhance skills development was launched at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Inspectorate was also successful in apprehending unwholesome products and contributing significant amounts to the national coffers through the fines imposed on offenders of commerce regulations.

## 2.6 Organogram

### New Basic Structure



## 2.7 Special Project Implementation Unit (SPIU)

### 2.7.1 *Overview of Liberia's situation in project implementation*

Two years after the 2014 EVD pandemic which dramatically plunged Liberia's economic growth rate from 8.7% to 0.3%, indicators now project Liberia's 2017 GDP at 3.2%. The indicators suggest further, that the economy is responding favorably to a range of fiscal measures implemented by the Government of Liberia and that Liberia will bounce back to a trajectory of growth. One notable measure taken by Government under its Agenda for Transformation is the expansion of duty-free privileges on agriculture machinery and farm inputs to incentivize agro-processing and manufacturing. These measures have contributed significantly to a noticeable increase in investments and investment interests in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Increase in production would invariably lead to more trade and congruently impact EIF project implementation objectives in Liberia.

During the period under review, the NIU/SPIU contributed significantly to the country's accession to the WTO. The NIU led the drafting team of the Liberia Post Accession Plan (LPAP) and worked relentlessly with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) in planning and hosting two separate Post Accession Protocol & Round Table workshops for the Legislators and for Donors aimed at enlightening the target groups, the plan of action for implementing the WTO commitments and the role each could play in facilitating the successful implementation of the LPAP.

Also, support from the highest level facilitated the smooth holding of two separate day consultation sessions with broad based stakeholder groups in the tourism and rubber wood sectors. These meetings culminated with the drafting and publication of two strategies for each of the sectors.

Mindful of the approaching end of the existing MoU, coupled with a period of inactivity due to the 2014 health crisis, the NIU/SPIU through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, submitted a No-Cost-Extension request together with the requisite Work Plan and budget to the Executive Secretariat of EIF and the Trust Fund Manager at UNOPS to extend implementation for an additional year – to June 30, 2017. The request was granted with some conditions.

### 2.7.2 *Effects on Project Objectives*

The response by key stakeholders, particularly those in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, to the business stimulus package accelerated and widened the scope of inter and intra trade. This process brought to bear pressure on MoCI and subsequently on the NIU/SPIU's activities and intensification of its involvement in all spheres of the operations of MoCI. One of such areas in which the NIU/SPIU has played a leadership role, is the revamping of the Liberia National Trade Facilitation Forum.

### **2.7.3 Achievement Highlights:**

#### **Roundtable on WTO post Accession Protocol and the Liberia Post Accession Plan (LPAP)**

The NIU/SPIU in collaboration with MoCI, organized two well-attended Post Accession Protocol & Round Table workshops. The first workshop was held for the Legislature and the second for donors. The meetings aimed to enlighten the target groups on the Liberia Post Accession Plan, the plan of action for implementing the WTO commitments and the role each could play in facilitating the successful implementation of the LPAP.

#### **Launch of the Tourism Trade Strategy**

The International Trade Corporation (ITC) was contracted to undertake a feasibility study on the Tourism sector of Liberia. After many consultative workshops with stakeholders - coordinated by the NIU/SPIU, the Tourism Strategy was completed within agreed timescale.

The Strategy was launched by the President of Liberia, Her Excellency, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Chief Executive Officer of the ITC, Madam Arancha Gonzalez during the Independence Day celebration in July 2016.

The highpoints of the program entailed:

- 1) The launch of the National Tourism Strategy;
- 2) The official launch of the Tourism website; and,
- 3) Displays development of the Kpatawee Waterfall.

In summary, recognition of the work and performance of the project by MoCI and other actors in the economy has been welcoming.

#### **The Liberia Rubberwood Furniture Trade Strategy**

Similar to the Tourism Trade Strategy, the feasibility study on the Rubber-wood Furniture sector was undertaken by ITC. The final draft of the Strategy was completed and received by MoCI in early December of the period under review.

#### **MoCI Communication Strategy**

Funding was provided by the EIF-SPIU to the Ministry for the hiring of a consultant to develop a communication strategy for the Ministry. The first draft of the Strategy was received by the MoCI/SPIU.

#### **The Liberian Marketplace**

This is a one-stop showcase and sales shop for locally produced commodities. The NIU/SPIU has funded the market place project from inception in 2014 up to 2016. In keeping with the MoU, the NIU and MoCI arranged with UNDP for funding to support the project's operation costs for a year. Support from the Japanese Government and MoCI made available a newly refurbished and more spacious location in which the Market Place has relocated.

### **External Audit of the Unit**

Due to the health crisis and a protracted period of inactivity and staffing issues in 2014 and early 2015, the NIU/SPIU commissioned and submitted a combined completed audit report on the project for the period 2014-2015 to ES and the TFM.

Additionally, to facilitate the external audit, the NIU/SPIU requested the MoCI for their internal auditors to undertake an internal audit of the project. Internal and external audits were completed and submitted as required.

### **TFM Mission to Liberia**

In early December (5-9) 2016, the Trust Fund Manager visited Liberia on Mission to Monrovia. The objective of the mission was to undertake a thorough review of the operation of the NIU/SPIU up to December 2016.

During the visit, several meetings were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Liberia Revenue Authority, and the World Bank.

## **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 a summarized implementation progress report on the Program of Assistance to Trade Support Institutions in Liberia (PATSil). This report covers the period January – December 2016. In August 2014, the project received the first disbursement from the Bank amounting to USD\$497,015.81 (representing 50% of the Grant).

This report provides a status of project activities commencing January 2016 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, there was more focus on procurement activities. Procurement training activities and the recruitment of a consulting firm to provide trade and business development technical assistance were of specific concentration during the period under review. Specifically, 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 advanced further with the recruitment of a consulting firm that will provide technical assistance under the project. No objection was received from the AfDB for the shortlisted consulting firms. And Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent to the six (6) shortlisted firms.

An evaluation committee (National Port Authority, Liberia Chamber of Commerce, Civil Service Agency and the MOCI) was set up to evaluate proposals submitted by four of the shortlisted consulting firms. The technical proposals were assessed and two firms were shortlisted, with one firm selected.

#### **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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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. The ICT equipment were since distributed to the beneficiaries; 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 and to date US\$497, 015.81 was disbursed.

#### **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 ongoing as planned, septic tank and generator house is built. Roofing is completed and internal works have commenced (Installation of conduit pipes, utility cups, ceiling and plastering).

### **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 has currently expanded the existing “Liberian Marketplace” Trade Store to the newly renovated facility located on the top floor of the Nancy B. Doe Jorkpen Town Market on 8th Street, Sinkor. The newly renovated facility will enhance market linkage and promote made in Liberia products from sectors like textile, manufacturing and food processing, arts and crafts, rubberwood, etc.

In the front of this facility, there is also a Farmer’s market for fresh fruit and vegetables. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and last Saturday of every month is a farmer’s market day where SMEs in the agri-business sector sell their produce. The estimated cost for the renovation of the Market place and remodeling of the front yard of the Market Place was **US\$114,975.00**, of which **US\$110,826.69** was expended. The back yard of the market is phase two of the project and it is estimated to cost **US\$50,000**, to be funded by the Government of Liberia.

### **2.9.2.1 Status of the Project**

The project is about 90% complete and SMEs has been assigned booths to sell their produce from Monday through Friday.

### **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. In 2016 the ministry signed an MoU with the Business Start-up Center (BSC), a local business development service provider for the selection and training of young entrepreneurs who make up the E+ First Class.

BSC competitively selected ten young entrepreneurs through a business plan competition and trained them in small business development.

#### **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.

#### ***2.9.4 Liberia Marketing Association Red Light Rice Depot***

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 2016 signed an MoU with the Liberia Marketing Association (LMA) for the use of the top floor of the Jorkpen Town Market to house the Liberian Market Place. In accordance with that MoU, the Ministry is expected to pay LMA US\$50,000. This amount was agreed to be used to construct a Rice Depot that will sell rice at wholesale price to marketers in the Redlight area.

#### **2.9.4.1 Status of the Project**

US\$25,000 disbursed to LMA from LIFE Fund. Project is 40% complete. Balance expected to be paid upon receipt of project progress report.

#### ***2.9.5 Liberian Marketplace Farmer's Market***

The Ministry of Commerce in partnership with WTO/EIF and the Government of Japan through the LIFE Fund, UNDP and USAID/LADA has expanded on the Liberian Marketplace Trade Store to the Liberian Marketplace and Farmers' Market at Nancy Doe Jorkpen Town Market in Sinkor. The Farmers' Market is organized by the Small Business Administration with support from the Department of Trade Services. This is a linkage initiative that brings the harvested farmer's produce to the market and brings the supermarkets, restaurant and hotel buyers to that market every 2<sup>nd</sup> and last Saturday of every month.

### **2.9.5.1 Status of the Project**

Renovation of the front of the Market Place-the farmer's market for the sale of fresh fruits and vegetable is completed and operational.

## **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.

To further enhance the socio-economic impact of the CVF-funded projects, the Management Guide was revised and is scheduled to be adopted by the Ministerial Steering Committee in February 2017, which is to be followed by a meeting of the Joint Steering Committee in March 2017 to decide on the approval of ongoing projects.

## 2.11 Liberia Intellectual Property System

The Intellectual Property System (IPS) has made notable achievements, especially with the passage of the IP Laws, which will give protection to Liberian inventions, creations and innovations. Additionally, with the amalgamation of the Copyright and Industrial Property offices into one location, the IPS is now poised to provide enhanced service delivery to the public. Moreover, with the completion of ongoing efforts to put in place an administrative

structure and the commencement of the enforcement of IP Laws, Liberian inventors and creators, including those possessing artistic and literary skills will now begin to realize earnings from same.

While admitting to challenges in the proper structuring of some segments of the sector, especially that of the performing arts, there is hope that with the establishment of the Collective Society, artists will begin to enjoy economic empowerment through fairer returns for their talents and performances.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry, in recognition of the ‘trade’ component of this sector, will continue to give full support for further development and growth in effort to achieve its full potential.

### 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 and Industry oversees the financial, physical and human capital of the Ministry. The Bureau develops and executes the approved fiscal budget as well as mobilizes resources for the efficient and successful implementation of all the Ministry's projects and programs.

During the year 2016, several notable achievements were made, thereby enhancing the Ministry's service delivery to the public. A summary of these achievements is listed below.

#### 3.2 Activity Highlights

- Completed Mandate Function Review (MFR) process in support of the Government of Liberia's Public-Sector Reform initiative for which the "Tripartite" (CSA, Governance Commission & LIPA) led the process.
- Negotiated for and acquired three (3) vehicles, hence improving logistics. Also, a total of fourteen (14) motorcycles were supplied for use by the inspectorate in the leeward counties
- Secured several computers (Desktops & Laptops) to ensure the successful implementation of the MoCI policy of providing at least one (1) workstation per division.
- Supported the MoCI efforts in the implementation of its key projects, to include; (i) WTO accession process, (ii) Passage of the Competition, Foreign Trade and Intellectual Property laws; (iii) Mobile Business Registration; (iv) Commencement of securing the Industrial Park by constructing a fence; and (v) the hosting of the WAMZ Trade Ministers' Forum; to name a few.

- Successfully implemented the FY2015/2016 budget
- Commissioned the review of the MoCI Strategic Plan (2013-2016)

### 3.3 Division of Knowledge Management & Archives

#### *Overview*

The Division of Knowledge Management & Archives (KM&A) has the responsibility of documenting and archiving all 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 conducts investigations and research, as needed, to ensure that activities being implemented are aligned with the Ministry's mandate and Strategic Plan.

In addition, the Division is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating various activities and projects undertaken by the ministry. Having cross-cutting functions and serving as a resource center, Knowledge Management & Archives also collaborates with other units on planning and implementing a range of projects & programs.

#### *Activity Highlights*

- Attended M&E training workshops in Buchanan and Ganta, hosted by the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning;
- Participated in training workshop, conducted by Connex, on Contract Implantation, Monitoring and Renegotiations;
- Collaborated, as a member of the MoCI Internal Reform Committee (IRC), with the “Tripartite” (Governance Commission, CSA & LIPA) to conduct Mandate & Function Review (MFR) towards the implementation of GoL's Public Sector Reform program.
- Collaborated with the Bureau of Trade Services for the successful hosting of ECOWAS TNCB meeting in Liberia.
- Collaborated with the Bureau of Trade Services in the on-going Continental Free Trade Area negotiation process.

### 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.

During the period in review the division of Human Resource performed its routine tasks, such as updating personnel data, ensure staff selection for training, co-ordinate the MoCI staff matters with the Civil Service Agency (CSA), and conduct performance assessments, to name a few.

***Activity Highlights:***

- Successfully retired thirteen (13) employees of the Ministry that met the CSA requirements for retirement;
- Conducted Performance Management training for directors, assistant directors and supervisors in an effort to establish Performance Management System at MoCI;
- Revised Job description for existing MoCI positions and transcribed them into the CSA job description format;
- Thirty-two (32) of the Ministry's employees benefited from trainings (local & international) in various disciplines. These training opportunities were made possible mainly through assistances from our development partners.

### **3.5 Division of Finance**

***Overview***

The Finance Division is headed by a Comptroller and assisted by a Deputy Comptroller for Accounts and a Deputy Comptroller for Budget. 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.

***FY2015/2016 Core Budget Execution***

The Finance Division commenced 2016 with the execution of the FY 2015/2016 Core Budget of US\$2,464,439; US\$450,000 of which was Grants to the Liberia Business Registry (LBR) and the balance US\$2,014,439 for the central office. Of the US\$2,464,439, US\$1,229,964 or 50% was for Compensation to Employees; US\$686,975 or 28% for Goods and Services, US\$97,500 or 4% for Fixed Assets Acquisition and 450,000 or 18% was for Grants (Liberia Business Registry).

Of the US\$2,464,439 appropriated to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for FY2015/2016, US\$2,370,332 or 96% was allotted and US\$2,311,829.74 or 94% of the allotment was expended.

***MoCI FY2016/2017 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 follow.

- |                                           |                           |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Bureau of Commerce and Trade Services   | <b>US\$802,289</b> or 28% |
| • Bureau of Industrial Services           | <b>\$623,866</b> or 22%   |
| • Bureau of Administration                | <b>\$1,284,578</b> or 45% |
| • Bureau of Small Business Administration | <b>\$114,507</b> or 4%    |

***MoCIFY2016/2017 Budget Execution***

As at December 31, 2016, total allotment of the Annual Appropriation of US\$2,825,240, was US\$1,391,837 or 49% and US\$1,065,215 or 38% of the budget expended. The balance in allotment was US\$326,622 or 12% and the balance in appropriation was US\$1,433,403 or 51%.

***Achievements***

- MoCI FY2015/2016 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 Commission Act of 2010.

***Challenges***

- Inadequate budgetary support to the Ministry by the Government of Liberia;
- Rigorous procurement process sometimes delays budget execution;
- Inadequate logistics for the Finance Division (i.e. computers, photo copier; air conditioners, especially for the IFMIS computers);
- MoCI IFMIS rollout and problems (delays) 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

***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- Seek more budgetary support for improvement in the execution of the Ministry statutory mandate;

- Provide 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:*

- Distributed fourteen (14) motorcycles to rural inspectors thereby improving the logistics requirement to enhance their operations;
- Facilitated the coding of the Ministry's assets;
- Successfully updated the Ministry's Assets Registry;
- Received three (3) new pick-ups which have been added to the Ministry's fleet;
- Conducted routine activities by providing maintenance for all the Ministry's assets and material support to the bureaus, divisions and units;
- Distributed four laptops and two (2) desktop computers donated by China Aid to four offices of 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:

- Prepared MoCI Procurement Plan for 2016
- Concluded procurement process resulting in the awarding of contracts for the supply of MoCI goods & services requirements
- Collaborated with the PPCC in handling technical procurement issues
- Participated in training workshop for the development of a framework agreement
- Participated in training workshop on “Revising the Annual Procurement Plan”

### **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***

- **Ensuring all offices have one set of workable IT Equipment:** Every Division in the Ministry has One Desktop and printer to enhance productivity
- **Procurement and installation of Cyber Roam License-**to improve internet speed
- **Website up-dating** – website has most recent information regarding Ministry activities, including 2016 MSME Conference, Liberia's accession to the WTO and the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) Conference in Liberia.
- **Receiving of ICT Equipment from Donors:** (ADB (PATSIIL Program), UNIDO, UNDP, SIDA and Peoples Republic of China).

#### ***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*

- Organized three round-table discussions with the Minister and Senior Editors of print and electronic media institutions. At these meetings, the launching of the 2016 MSME Conference, the National Export Strategy on Tourism and the hosting of the West Africa Monetary Zone Conference were discussed.
- Published announcements, press releases and other publication in the print and electronic media.
- Attended and participated in workshops organized by the Carter Center, Government Decentralization program in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County and a World Bank sponsored training on Strategic Communication in Gbarnga, Bong County.
- Provided media coverage for programs on Liberia's accession to the WTO.
- Covered and published the Minister's appearance at the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs Tourism's Regular Press Briefings.
- Provided media coverage for the launching of the mobile business registration program in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County.



Ministry of Commerce and Industry Participates in Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia and Hon. Steve Marvie, Jr., Deputy Minister Commerce & Trade



Launch of Liberia National Export Strategy on Tourism (L-R) Commerce Minister Axel M. Addy, Ms. Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director of ITC And Information Minister Eugene Nagbe



Liberia Chairs West African Trade Ministers Meeting in Lomé, Togo Deputy Minister for Commerce & Trade, Hon. Steve Marvie, Jr. chairs ECOWAS Trade Meeting



Liberia Participates in UNCTAD 14: "From Decisions to Actions" Group Photo of Liberia Delegation to The UNCTAD Forum in Nairobi, Kenya



US Ambassador Pays Courtesy Call on Minister Axel M. Addy. US Ambassador Christine A. Elder and Commerce Minister Axel M. Addy in group photo with officials of both the US Embassy and Senior Management Team of the Ministry of Commerce



**Commerce Minister Returns from Trade Mission to Ghana with Liberia's major Oil Palm Investors to support export of Liberia's Crude Palm Oil (CPO) to Ghana.** Commerce Min. Axel M. Addy (center) in group photo with participants at the meeting



**Commerce Minister Joins Vice President of Zimbabwe for the Official Opening of ARIPO New Headquarters – Returns with New Scholarship and Training Opportunities for Liberians to be trained in Intellectual Property.** Hon. Axel M. Addy, Commerce Minister and Vice-Chair of ARIPO Council of Ministers during the opening ceremony of ARIPO newly constructed Headquarters, Harare, Zimbabwe



**Commerce Minister Joins the President of the Republic of Liberia at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual SBA 2016 MSME Conference and Trade Fair closing program.** Hon. Axel M. Addy, Commerce Minister and H. E. Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia at the closing program of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual SBA 2017 MSME Conference and Trade Fair.

## 4.0 BUREAU OF COMMERCE AND TRADE SERVICES



Hon. Stephen Towain Marvie, Jr  
*Deputy Minister for Commerce and Trade Services*

### 4.1 Overview

The Bureau of Trade Services worked assiduously to successfully guide the re-integration of Liberia into the global trading arena. During the period under review, Liberia gained full recognition as a WTO member. In our effort to meet the commitments and responsibilities, a needs assessment was conducted which culminated into the development and launch of a WTO Post-Accession Plan. We herein express our gratitude to all Partners who have offered and provided technical assistance and support to build our institutional and human capacity, thereby enabling Liberia to effectively participate in regional and international trade.

Nonetheless, despite these achievements, the road ahead still poses many challenges for which we stand resolute to overcome.

### 4.2 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;
- Completed the 2015 Annual Trade Bulletin and published in 2016
- 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, business round table, business to business, government to business, and rubber. Key deliverables were the formulation of a draft regulation to address 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 National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) Meeting and began working with APM Terminals and the private sector to monitor and streamline non-tariff barriers that impede trade facilitation at the Free Port of Monrovia.
- Participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) Trade Ministers' Forum- Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at the Boulevard Palace Hotel.
- Coordinated port clearing trade facilitation meetings with MoCI, LRA, APM Terminal and BIVAC;
- Coordinated several walkthroughs of processes at the Freeport to remove hurdles to trade.
- Reduce non-tariff barriers at RIA by curtailing the number of documents required for import and export.

### ***Challenges***

The Division is under staffed and in dire need of a vehicle.

### 4.3 WTO ORGANIZATION UNIT

The WTO Unit was established to undertake and support technical works relative to Liberia multilateral, regional, and sub-regional trade activities. As such, it became clear that one of the Unit main priorities was to support Liberia accession to the WTO and its post accession implementation as enshrined in the country's broader development agenda. During the period under review, the Unit undertook several technical works and achieved the below outcomes.

#### **Liberia WTO Post-Accession Plan (LPAP)**

Having provided technical support to Liberia WTO accession negotiating team and as Liberia formally became the 163 Member of the WTO on 15 July 2016, the WTO Unit mandate shifted to focus on post-accession implementation which revolves around: (1) capacity development, (2) internal coordination and stakeholders' engagement, and (3) implementation of Liberia WTO commitment matrix and notification obligations.

#### **Capacity Development**

During the post-accession implementation phase, several staff of the WTO Unit benefited from high-level capacity development training through the Netherlands and China internship programs in Geneva. As a result, the staff capacity was broadened and enhanced allowing them to effectively contribute to the implementation of the LPAP and ensure Liberia active participation in regular WTO work. The Unit coordinated major stakeholder capacity building activities including, National Workshop on Post-accession, National Single Window Assessment workshop, workshop on ECOWAS trade protocols, CET and ETLS and other trainings on SPS and TBT organized by the Swedish National Board of Trade (NBT).

The WTO Reference Center serves as a learning hub for the business community and anyone interested in knowing more about the WTO and international trade. Through the reference center and, with assistance from NBT, the Unit launched the WTO e-learning program. This is a platform provided for interested candidates to pursue online courses on WTO Agreements, such as SPS and TBT, TFA, TRIPS, Services, etc. Several participants from within the ministry and outside have enrolled into the e-learning program and are progressing at various levels. The **WTO awareness and outreach activities** were also launched. The aim is to create awareness on post-accession activities and its impact on Liberia economic growth and development. The first phase targeted various universities in Monrovia and three major commercial hubs in rural Liberia, including Ganta, Gbarnga and Buchanan.

#### **Internal Coordination and Engagement of Stakeholders**

The Unit technically serves as a secretariat responsible for internal coordination and stakeholder engagement. Together with Liberia development partners, the Unit provided technical support and organized several meetings, including:

1. MoCI Steering Committee and Technical Working Group with national stakeholders;
2. The private sector meeting on standardization;
3. Meetings on SPS and TBT enquiry points, Trade Facilitation, Single Window platform and Verification of Conformity (VOC), Tourism and fisheries sectors;
4. Business Round Table, World Bank Doing Business Indicator Score Card;
5. ECOWAS CET and ETLS and initial work on the Services Portal;
6. The Unit equally spearheads the management and operationalization of the SPS and TBT enquiry points, MoCI WTO Google Drive, WTO page updates, and MoCI/Geneva Mission weekly skype meeting.

#### **Liberia WTO commitment matrix and notification obligations**

The Unit is also charged with the responsibility to monitor and ensure the implementation of Liberia WTO commitments and notification obligations. The commitment matrix is gradually being implemented. Some inputs have been provided regarding the foreign trade, competition and SEZ laws, ECOWAS CET, IP Act 2014, new Customs Code, VAT and PSI. Both SPS and TBT enquiry points have been set up and operationalized. SPS enquiry point had been notified to the WTO. Law on standard body and guideline on conformity assessment have been drafted. Technical regulatory committees are also established. The notification matrix is also being updated with technical assistance from NBT.

## **4.4 Division of Price Analysis and Marketing**

### ***Overview***

The Division of Price Analysis and Marketing was established in 1973 amidst the increase of global crude oil prices in the world which led to an increase of domestic prices. President William R. Tolbert, in his wisdom felt it was necessary to have a section within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with the responsibility of controlling and regulating prices on the local market.

In response to the statutory mandate of the Division of Price Analysis and Marketing, the division in the past was regulating prices in the Commerce of Liberia to avoid unfair business practices. All importers were requested to submit copies of their import documents to the Division for analysis, for costing purposes.

Meanwhile, as Liberia acceded to World Trade Organization (WTO), the responsibility of the Division shifted from “Price Control” to “Price Monitoring” of basically few major commodities (**Rice, Petroleum Products, Pharmaceutical Products, Cement, flour, nail and Eggs**).

***Activities Highlight:***

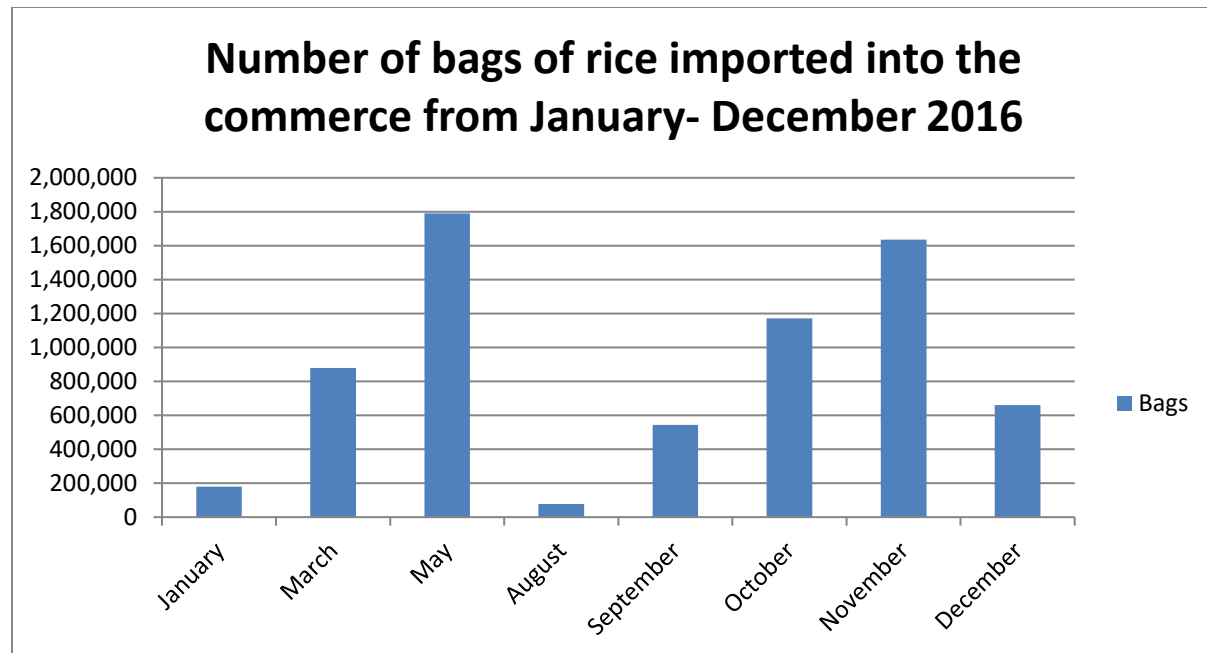
- Conduct verification of invoices submitted to the Division;
- Regulate and monitor major commodities inventory such as, rice, petroleum products, cement, flour, nail and eggs to avoid shortage on the local market;
- Publish Weekly Market Report of six major commodities (Rice, Petroleum products, Cement, flour, nail and eggs);
- Published monthly petroleum products price circulars and petroleum cheat sheets
- Published Commerce Today
- Published Commodity Profiles.

**RICE:**

During the year under review, four major importers traded in the rice market, maintaining a minimum two-three months buffer stock in the country throughout the year. Commendably, despite the number of importers, the prices of various types of rice remained relatively stable (in the range of USD 14.50-16.50). Indian Parboiled (5 percent broken) kept a constant wholesale price of US\$16.00 per 25kg bag throughout the year 2016.

From January-December 2016, the market experienced the total importation of six million nine hundred thirty-eight thousand eight forty (6,938,840) 25KG bags into the commerce of Liberia which represent a decrease of 39.98 percent importation compared to 2015.

***Figure 1: Chart depicting rice importation statistics from Jan –Dec. 2016***



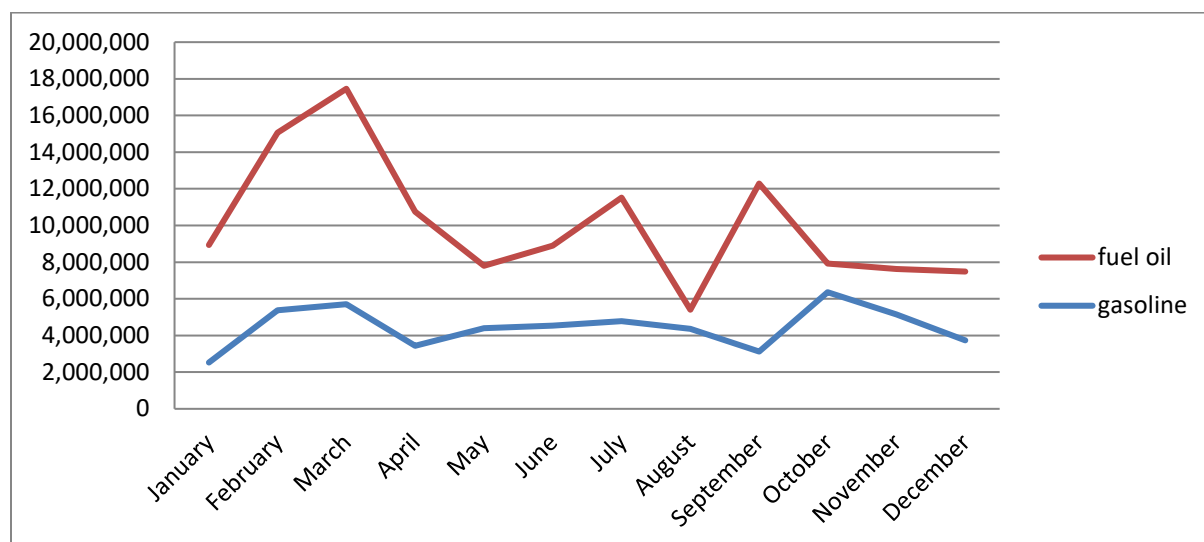
### **Petroleum Products:**

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 fluctuations of petroleum products are based on the Platts which determines the International FOB Value. Also, it is worth noting that fluctuations in the value of the Liberian Dollar against other currencies influence the costs of petroleum products on the local market. During the year under review, a total of ten circulars on petroleum prices were published by the Division, in collaboration with LPRC, thereby informing on monthly prices.

The Division also took inventory on the stock data of products imported into the commerce of Liberia from January to December 2016. Fifty-three million four hundred eighty-six thousand eight twenty-three (53,486,823) gallons of MOGAS and sixty-seven million six hundred fifty-nine thousand one hundred sixteen (67,659,116) gallons of GASOIL were imported into the commerce of Liberia.

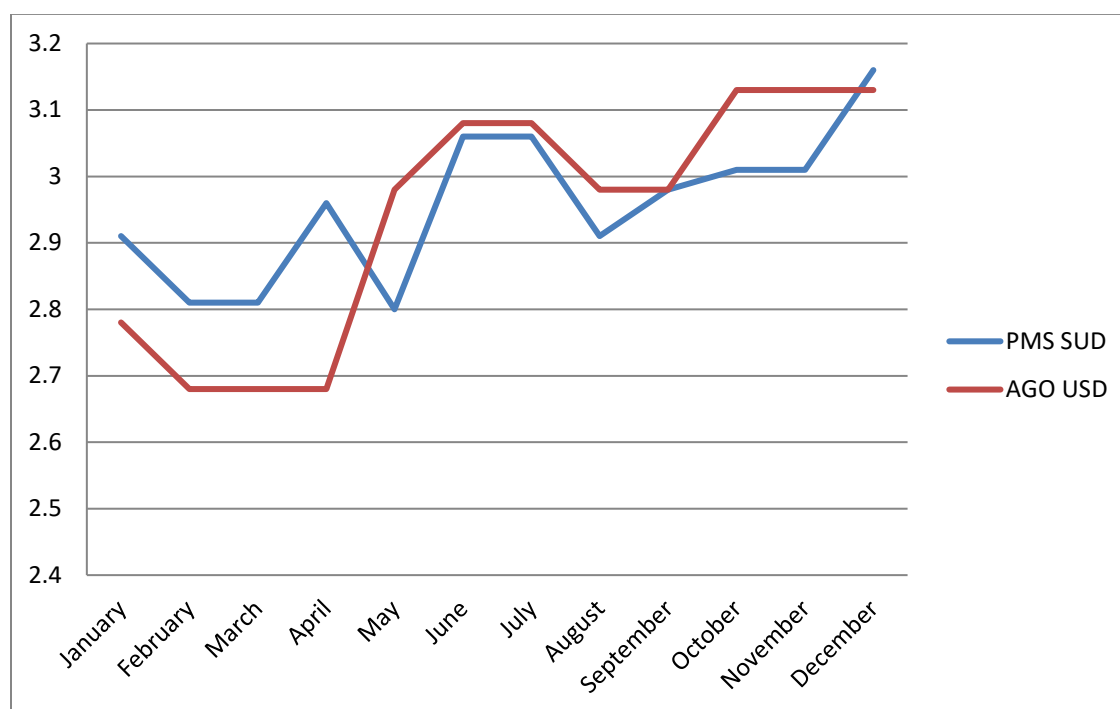
***Figure 2: Graph Depicting Petroleum Products Import Statistics Jan-Dec.2016***

**GALLONS OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS  
IMPORTED INTO THE COMMERCE OF LIBERIA  
FROM January-DECEMBER 2016**



**Table 1: Prices of Petroleum Products Jan-Dec. 2016****THE PRICES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS ON THE LOCAL MARKET FROM JANUARY – DECEMBER 2016**

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

**Figure 3: Graph Depicting Pump Price of Petroleum Products Jan-Dec.2016****PUMP PRICE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS  
FROM January-DECEMBER 2016**

**Cement:**

The cement market is being supplied by three companies; CEMENCO, Fouta and Kpaku Plaza respectively. CEMENCO focuses on the manufacturing of cement on the local market while importation of finished products is left with Fouta Corporation and Kpaku Plaza.

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 adequate stocks available for the local market.

A total of two million three hundred thousand (2,380,000) bags of cement were imported during the period under review.

The following tables show monthly statistics on the quantity of cement available (imported & locally produced) on the local market.

***Table 2: Cement Imported into the Commerce of Liberia from Jan-Dec. 2016***

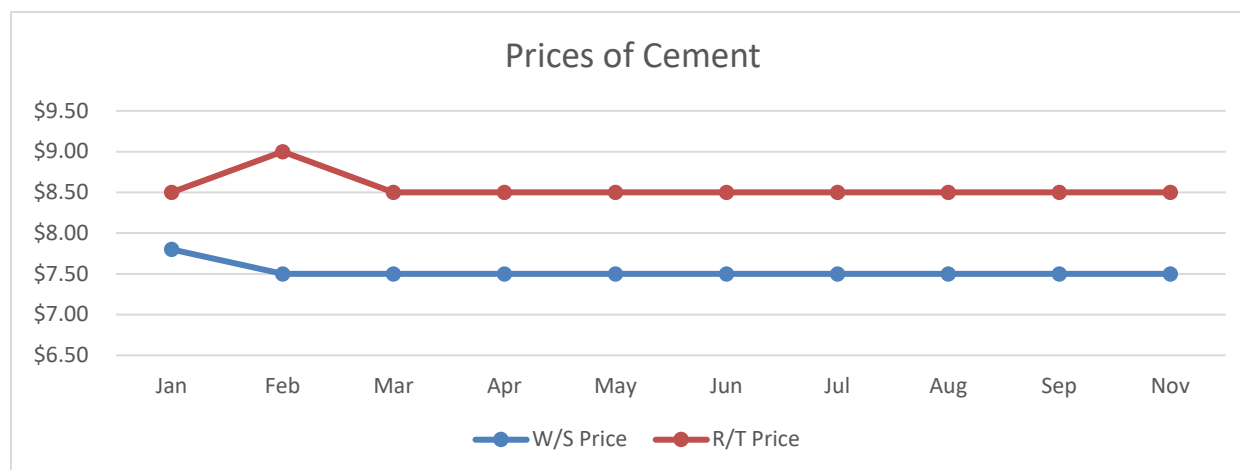
**CEMENT IMPORTED INTO THE COMMERCE OF LIBERIA  
FROM JANUARY – DECEMBER 2016**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Total MT</b>	<b>Bags (50Kg)</b>
January	34,000	680,000
February	12,000	240,000
April	23,000	460,000
May	50,000	1,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119,000</b>	<b>2,380,000</b>

***Table 3: Locally Produced Cement Available in Liberia from Jan-Dec. 2016***

**LOCALLY PRODUCED CEMENT AVAILABLE IN LIBERIA  
FROM JANUARY – DECEMBER 2016**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Total MT</b>	<b>Bags (50Kg)</b>
January	35,828	716,560
February	35,000	700,000
March	34,800	696,000
April	31,850	637,000
May	33,400	668,000
June	23,700	460,000
July	19,500	390,000
August	15,000	300,000
September	18,380	367,600
October	19,155	383,100
November	20,000	400,000
December	20,351	407,020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>306,964</b>	<b>6,139,280</b>

*Figure 4: Graph Depicting Price of Cement Jan-Dec. 2016***Commerce Today:**

The Commerce Today Critical Commodities Bulletin is a publication of the Division of Price Analysis and Marketing. This price bulletin is a monthly publication that brings out the stock level and prices of six major commodities in the Commerce of Liberia. This bulletin also highlights private sector spotlight and analysis of global and regional gasoline prices. The Division has published twelve editions on the Ministry's website and fifty-two (52) copies of the Weekly Market Report to the Senior Management Team (SMT) in 2016.

**EGGS:**

During the year under review, the Division also monitored the importation and inventory of eggs on the local market. In 2016, the market experienced the total import of one hundred eighty-four million four hundred sixty-four thousand six hundred eighty-eight (184,464,688) eggs which represent 148 forty-foot containers. The Division also monitored the production of eggs on the Obasanjo Farm, where reports received from the management cites an output of seven (7) cartons per week which represent 0.01 percent of total eggs on the market per week.

**FLOUR AND NAIL PRODUCTION:**

Premier Milling Corporation (PMC) and Garson Steel and Visionnet are the main manufacturers of these industrial products. PMC has a minimum production capacity of 35 containers of flour a month. Imported flour accounts for the outstanding 5 containers needed to account for a monthly demand of flour within the commerce. Garson Steel and Visionnet have contained to manufactured common wire nails and have recorded some steady sales because of trade-supported measures taken by the Ministry. During the year under review, the market experienced full supply of both flour and nail with stable prices.

## **Conclusion**

The Division of Price Analysis and Marketing 2016 Report highlights the price analysis of six major commodities (Rice, Petroleum Products, Cement, Flour, nail and Eggs) imported into the Commerce of Liberia from January to December. The report also shows that the price fluctuation of petroleum products on the local market was based on the Platts that determines the International FOB Value. Premier Milling and Garrison Steel performed well as there was no report of shortage of these products on the local market with relative fair prices in 2016.

## **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 the commencement of its operation, 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

- As a result of the automation of the business registration processes in Liberia, a total of - 10,759 businesses were registered from January 2, 2016 to December 31, 2016. In the total, Liberian owned businesses accounted for 9,383 representing 87 percent, while Non-Liberian owned are 1376 or 13 percent) of the total registration;
- During the period under review, a total number of 8,083 as new businesses were registered. A total of 7,140 accounted for Liberian owned businesses, while a total 943 for Non-Liberian owned businesses;
- The registration statistics based on ownership by gender during the period under review shows that 12,410 males and 4,839 females are owners of the registered businesses;
- Generated revenue from business registration and other charges and services are as follows: Liberian Dollars amounted to **L\$ 37,837,123.10**, United States Dollars amounted to **US\$ 1,334,460.90**;
- Maintained the number of procedures to register businesses to 2 and reducing the number of days in registering of businesses from 6 days to 2 days or 48 hours;
- Increased transparency by printing all fees and charges for business registration and services on a plastic board at the Liberia Business Registry;
- The LBR continued to register businesses within, at most, 48 hours when all the requirements are met as evidenced by the Doing Business Survey Team of the World Bank Group 2017 report which has ranked Liberia at 37<sup>th</sup> position in “Starting a business” out of 213 economies.

## Challenges

- Insufficient funding: To improve beyond our present rankings, the LBR must be well funded in order to function smoothly as envisioned, in keeping with international best practices.
- Lots of businesses ranging from 80% - 90% are yet to renew their annual business registration. LBR needs to address structural challenges and respond to some of the compliance issues impacting the registry

To address these challenges the following recommendations are being made:

- The budget of approximately, US\$ 500,000.00 is required over the next two (2) years to strengthen automation programs and promote awareness and outreach for the registry. All furniture & fittings at the LBR were provided from the IFC grant during the establishment of the registry. These assets are nearly depreciated and need to be replaced;
- To decentralize the services of the LBR to two counties per year, selection of such counties should be based on statistics of commercial activities in those counties and will require US\$ 250,000.00 in addition to the aforementioned amount;
- Those statutory laws that gave the Ministry of Commerce & Industry the powers to register businesses and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the powers to incorporate corporate entities should be either repealed or modified to give the LBR the teeth it needs to function as a one-stop-shop and avoid a duplication of function.
- The NRD has now been contracted to up-grade and render some support services to the LBR such as, fixing bugs and technical glitches in the LBR system which may not easily be handled by our local IT consultants, and avoid serious break-downs to the LBR system. We need to ensure full viability of the contract;
- A joint team comprising of representatives from the LBR/MoCI and LRA needs to enforce business registration and renewal compliance should be set up.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS GRAND SUMMARY CY 2015 AND 2016					
NO.	CATEGORY	JAN. 2, - DEC. 31, 2015	JAN. 2, - DEC. 31, 2016	GROWTH	DECREASE
1	Corporation	2,671	3,527	24%	-
2	Corporation Subsidiary	330	540	39%	-
3	Partnership	64	154	58%	-
4	Partnership Subsidiary	26	69	62%	-
5	Sole Proprietorship	4,905	5,204	6%	-
6	Not - For - Profit Corp. (NGO)	1,039	1,221	14%	-
7	NGO BRANCH	15	44	66%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9,050</b>	<b>10,759</b>	<b>16%</b>	-

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: NEW BUSINESSES SUMMARY CY 2015 AND 2016					
NO.	CATEGORY	JAN. 2 - DEC. 31, 2015	JAN. 2 - DEC. 31, 2016	GROWTH	DECREASE
1	Corporation	2,027	2,557	21%	-
2	Corporation Subsidiary	238	346	31%	-
3	Partnership	49	107	54%	-
4	Partnership Subsidiary	20	53	62%	-
5	Sole Proprietorship	3,983	4,120	3%	-
6	Not - For - Profit Corp. (NGO)	827	869	5%	-
7	NGO BRANCH	13	31	58%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,157</b>	<b>8,083</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>-</b>

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OLD BUSINESSES SUMMARY CY 2015 AND 2016					
NO.	CATEGORY	JAN. 2, - DEC. 31, 2015	JAN. 2, - DEC. 31, 2016	GROWTH	DECREASE
1	Corporation	644	970	37%	-
2	Corporation Subsidiary	92	194	53%	-
3	Partnership	15	47	68%	-
4	Partnership Subsidiary	6	18	12%	-
5	Sole-Proprietorship	922	1,084	15%	-
6	Not-For-Profit Corp. (NGO)	212	352	40%	-
7	NGO BRANCH	2	11	81%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,893</b>	<b>2,676</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>-</b>

ITEM	JAN. 2, - DEC. 31, 2015	JAN. 2, - DEC. 31, 2016	GROWTH	DECREASE
<b>TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED LD\$</b>	<b>L\$36,473,224.00</b>	<b>L\$37,837,123.10</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED USD\$</b>	<b>US\$1,589,228.57</b>	<b>US\$1,334,460.90</b>		<b>13%</b>

**STATISTICAL CHARTS**

The reporting period (January 2, – December 31, 2016) registered a grand total of Ten thousand seven hundred fifty-nine (10,759) enterprises both profit and not-for-profit. This figure is indicative of Liberian and Non- Liberian ownership as shown in Chart 1. The chart indicates more Liberian enterprises registered than Non-Liberian owned.

Also in these reports are comparative analyses of business registration, new registrations, revenue generated both in Liberian Dollars and United States Dollars, comparing two periods (2015 and 2016) performances.

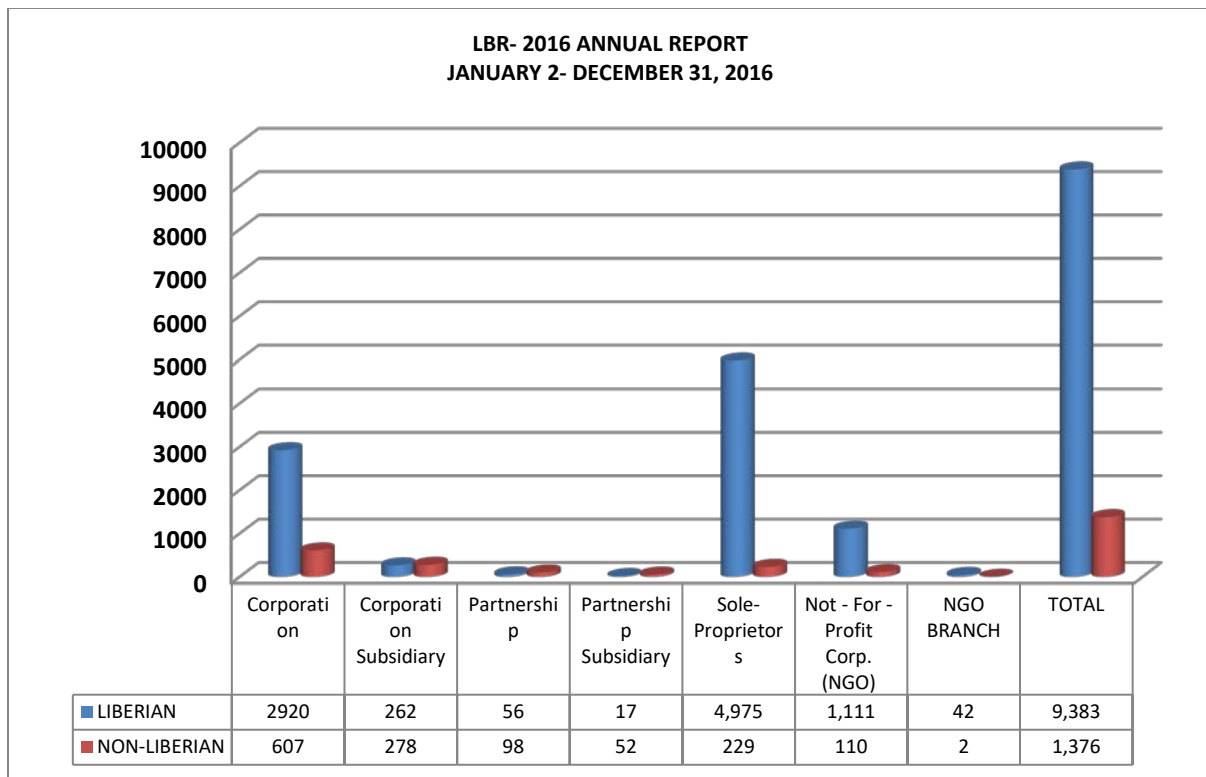
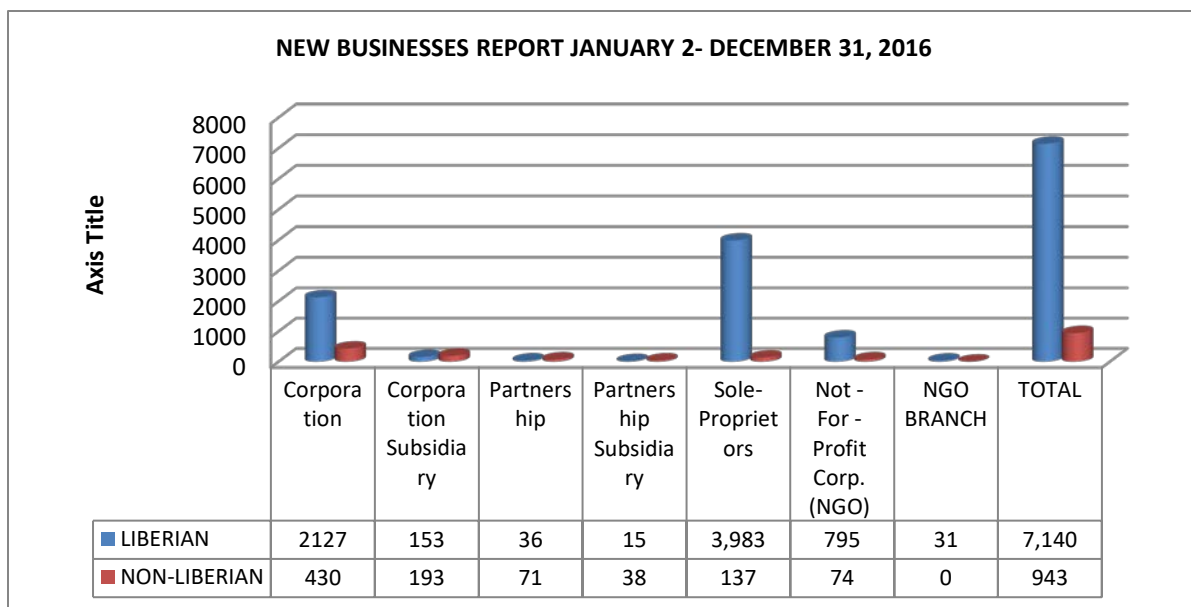
**Chart 1: LBR 2016 Annual Report****Chart 2: LBR 2016 New Businesses Report**

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

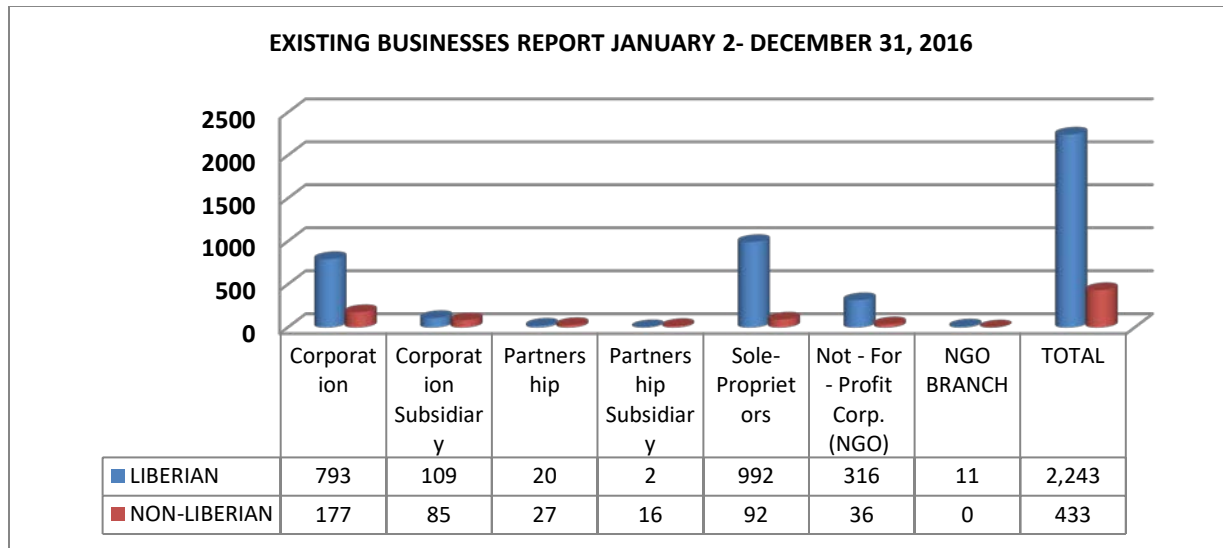
**Chart 3: LBR 2016 Existing Businesses Report**

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

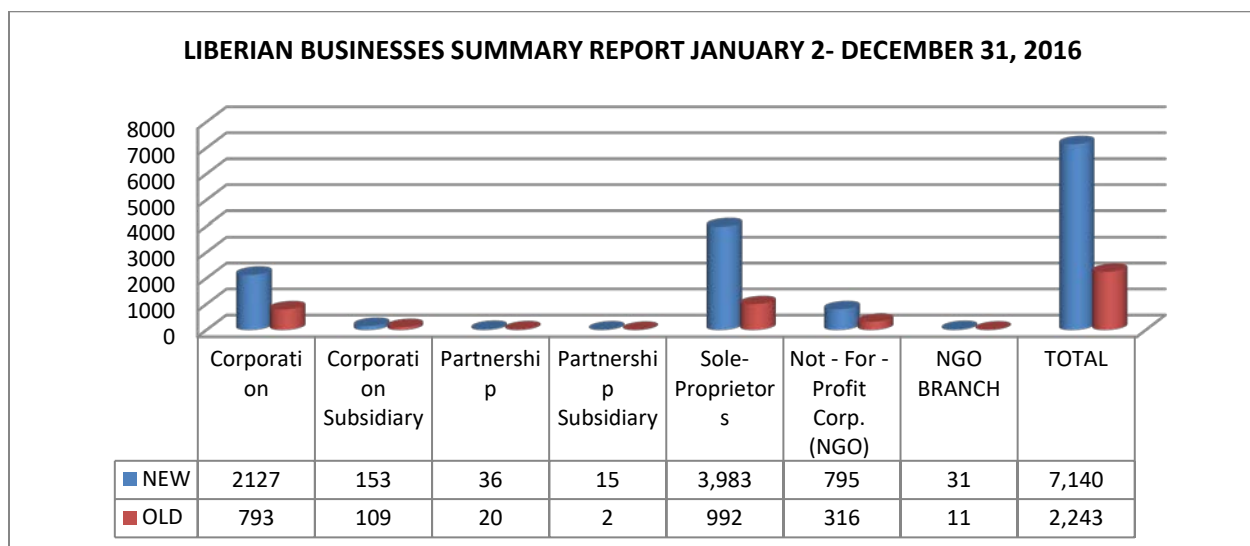
**Chart 4: Summary Report for Liberian-Owned Businesses**

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

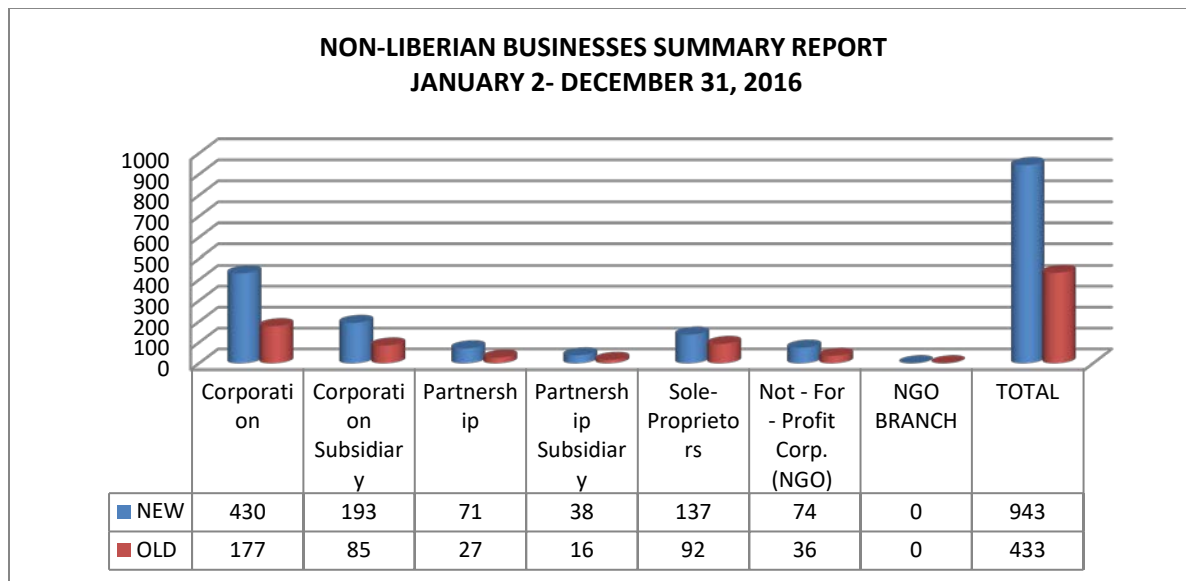
*Chart 5: Summary Report for Non-Liberian-Owned Businesses*

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

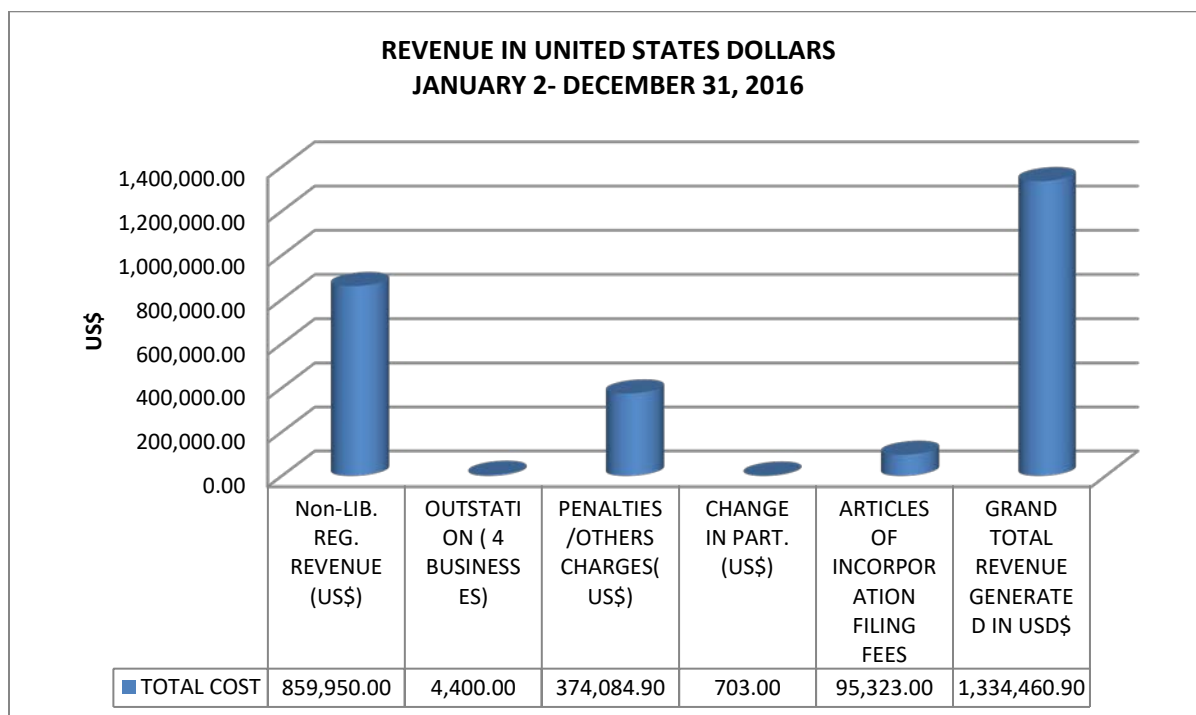
*Chart 6: Revenue Generated (USD)*

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

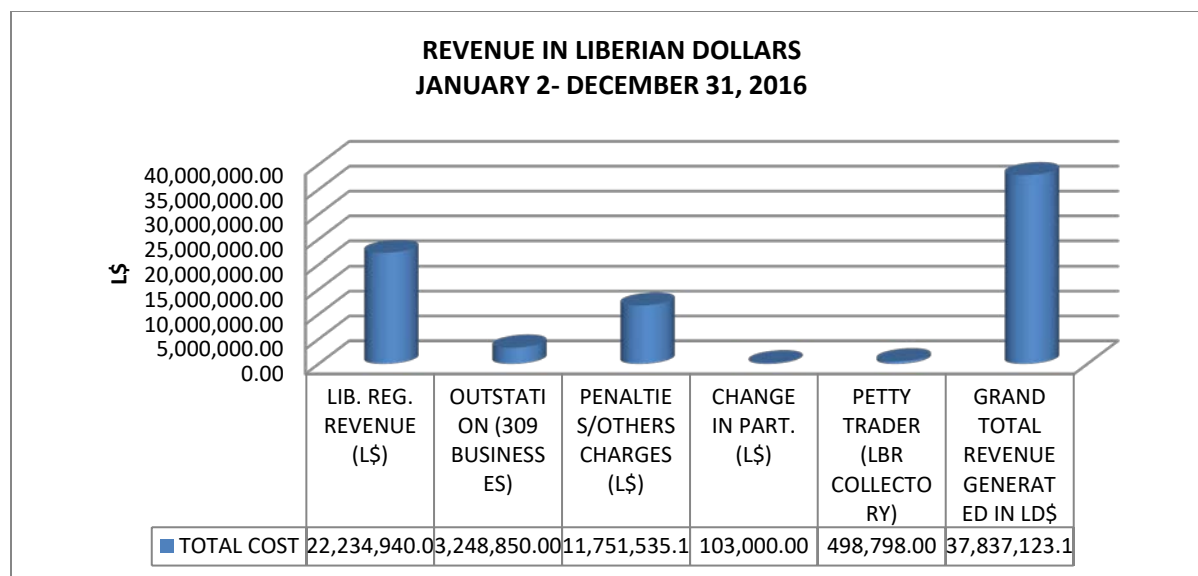
**Chart 7: Revenue Generated (LD)**

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

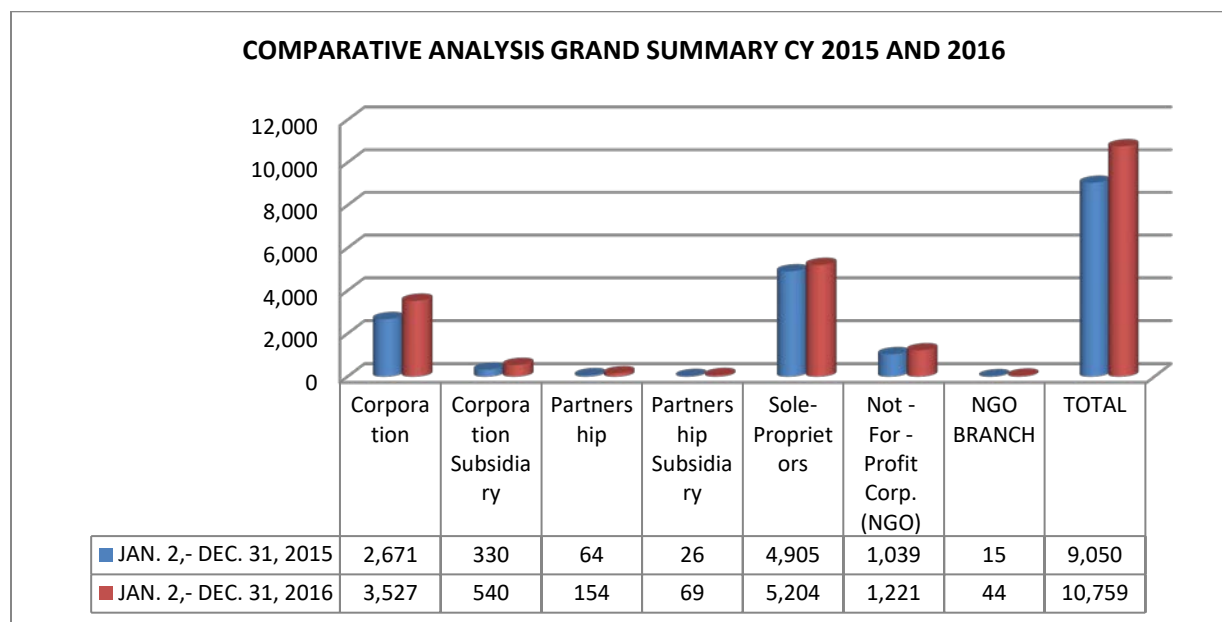
**Chart 8: Comparative Summary Analysis, 2015 v. 2016**

Chart 8 as shown above, compares two periods (2015 and 2016) of the number of businesses registered according to their enterprise types. 2016 experienced a total increase of 16% in registered businesses over 2015. The concept of taking statistics on increase, or decrease, of existing businesses is that it informs on our business mortality rate.

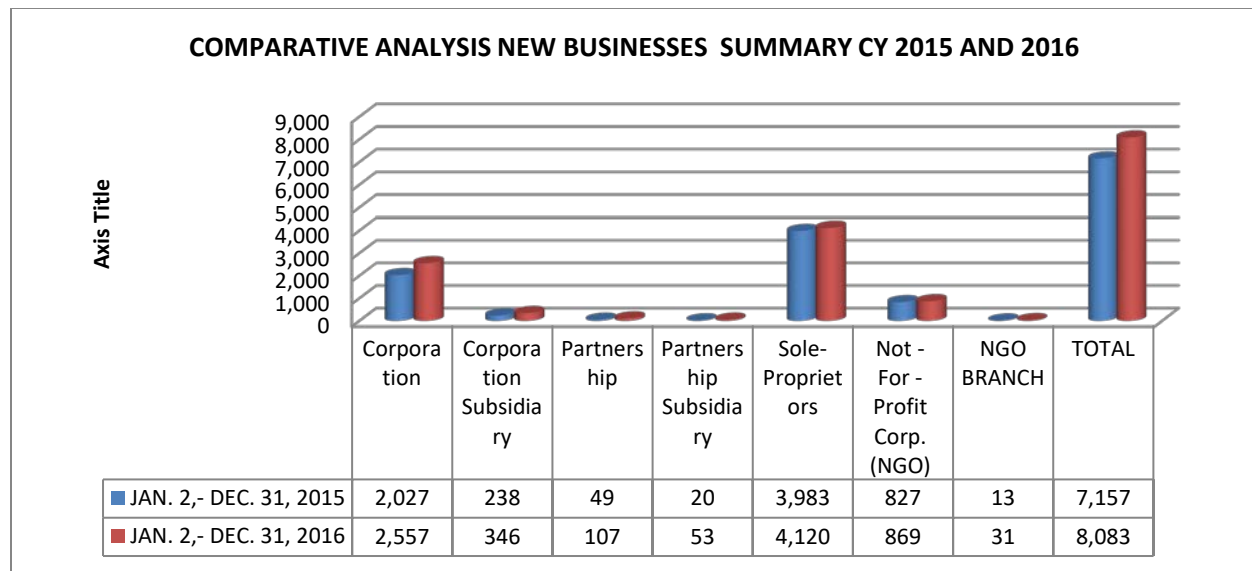
**Chart 9: Comparative Analysis of New Businesses, 2015 v. 2016**

Chart 9 as shown above, compares two periods (2015 and 2016) of the number of new businesses registered according their enterprise types. 2016 experienced a total increase of 11% in newly registered businesses over 2015.

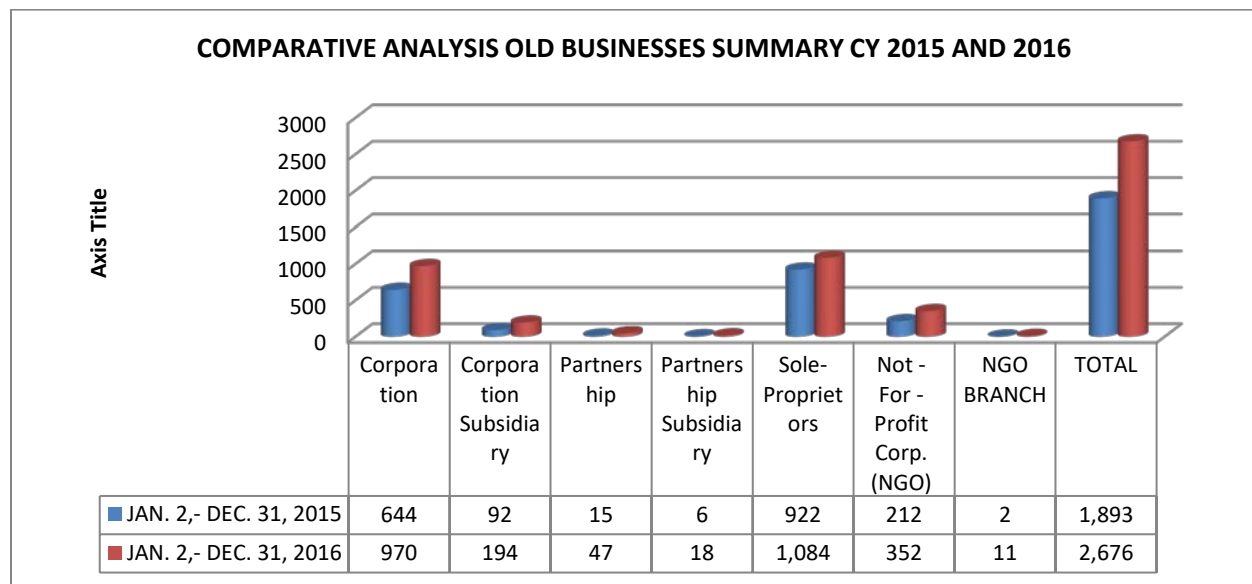
**Chart 10: Comparative Analysis of Registration Renewals, 2015 v. 2016**

Chart 10 as shown above, compares two periods (2015 and 2016) of the number of renewed businesses registered according their enterprise types. 2016 experienced a total increase of 29% in renewed businesses over 2015.

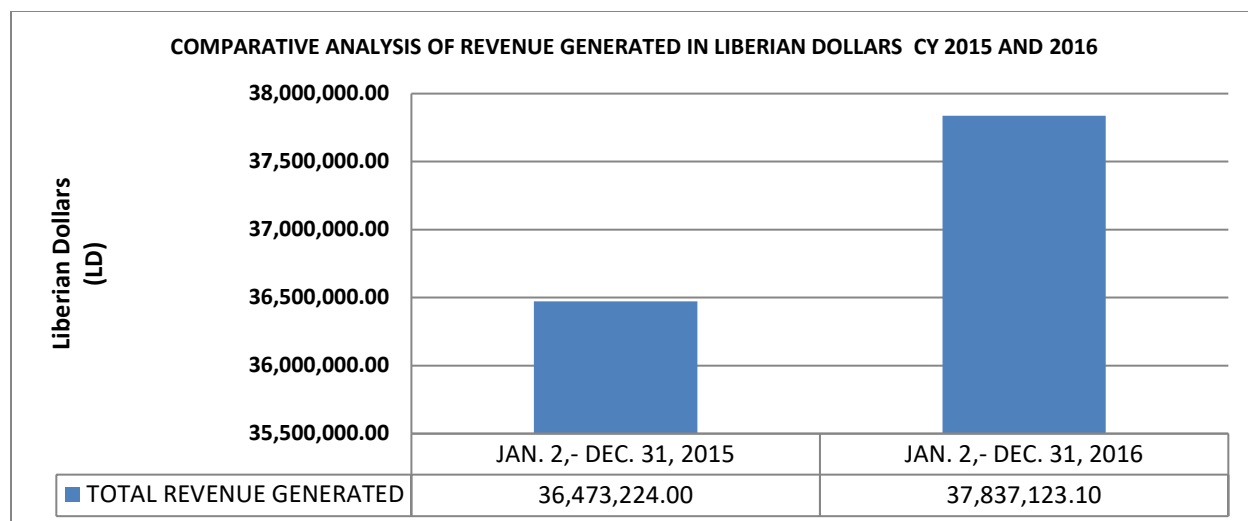
**Chart 11: Comparative Analysis, Revenue Generated (LD), 2015 v. 2016**

Chart 11 as shown above, compares two periods (2015 and 2016) of the number of the amount of revenue generated in Liberian Dollars from various sources: Business Registration Fees, Change of Particulars and Name Reservation. 2016 experienced a growth of 4% over 2015.

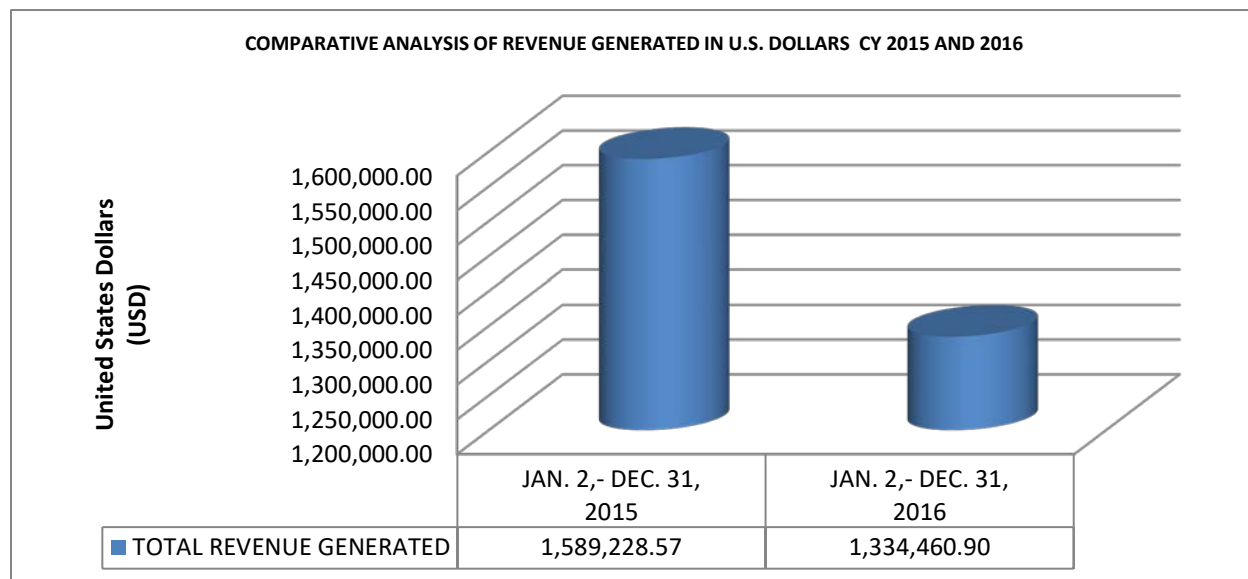
**Chart 12: Comparative Analysis, Revenue Generated (USD), 2015 v. 2016**

Chart 12 as shown above, compares two periods (2015 and 2016) of the number of the amount of revenue generated in United States Dollars from various sources: Business Registration Fees, Change of Particulars, Name Reservation and Filing Fees of Articles of Incorporation. 2016 experienced a decrease in revenue of 13% over 2015.

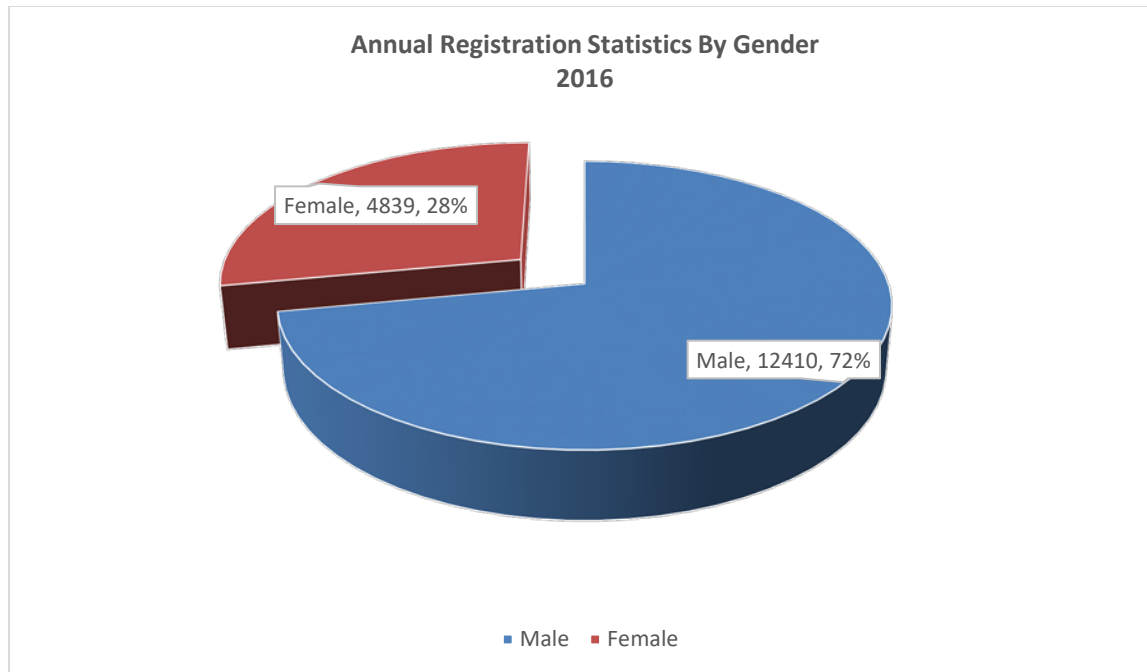
*Chart 13: Ownership by Gender*

Chart 13 as shown above, indicates statistics based on ownership by gender during the 2016 registration period.

## 5.0 BUREAU OF INDUSTRIAL SERVICES



Hon. Roland Carey

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

### 5.1 Overview

The Bureau of Industrial services oversees the development and growth of the industrial sector of the Liberian economy. It duly implements the National Industry Policy, provides guidance for the establishment and operation of industries through policies and regulations. The Bureau, which is headed by a Deputy Minister (who also serves as Inspector-General of the MoCI Inspectorate) and aided by an Assistant Minister, also has oversight for standards and compliance to the Liberia Business Act and industrial policies and regulations. With Liberia's entry into the global trading arena, the Bureau focuses greatly on expanding the industrial sector and encouraging value addition to ensure competitiveness.

#### Activity Highlights:

- Completed the formation of the Technical Committee on Enquiry Point and National Notification Authority for TBT & WTO;
- Established Technical Committee on CODEX and adopted fifteen (15) international standards to complement existing National Standards;
- The Ministry of Commerce through the BOIS in collaboration with UNIDO embarked on the second phase of the Komatsu training program for the recruitment of 200 students into the field of basic hydraulics, excavator operations and maintenance.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry through the BOIS in collaboration with UNIDO has established and launched a research and training center to enhance skills development.

- The BOIS through the **West Africa Quality System Program** (funded by EU and implemented by UNIDO) produced and validated the **National Quality Policy**, with participation of both private and public stakeholders. This policy establishes the basis for development of Liberia's quality infrastructure to facilitate trade.
- The BOIS has enhanced the regulatory framework for addressing substandard products on the commerce of Liberia through the drafting of the below regulations:
  - Liquefied petroleum gas
  - Fortified Wheat Flour
  - Packaged Water Products-Sachet Water
- Published technical regulations on flour & service stations;
- Twelve (12) staff completed foreign training in Standards & Quality Management; an additional two (2) staff trained locally on "Conduct of Inspection- Techniques & Procedures"; Established MoU between the Ghana Standards Board and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry for the purpose of testing local products;
- Acquired two vehicles, through MoCI Administration, from UNDP;
- Developed Industrial and Food Safety Inspection Guides

## 5.2 Division of Inspectorate

### Overview

The Division of Inspectorate, during the period under review, conducted inspections in strict compliance to the procedures as recommended in the reform process. The reforms considered the legal framework, structure and procedures for the combined Inspectorate and Standards. Full observance of guidelines recommended relating to inspection periods, reporting format, methods for acquiring feedback responses and the handling of complaints. These guidelines, which were implemented in the urban areas, were extended to the rural areas.

#### Activity Highlights:

- Established presence in the Service Centers of seven (7) counties;
- Confiscated smuggled items at several border posts, to include: twenty-five bags of cocoa & ten bags of flour which were auctioned with funds being remitted to GoL revenue and, several bags of meat skin which were denied entry into the Liberian commerce;

- Generated the total amounts of L\$4,068,040.00 (FOUR MILLION SIXTY-EIGHT THOUSAND & FORTY LIBERIAN DOLLARS) and US\$23,950.00 (TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED & FIFTY UNITED STATES DOLLARS) from the service centers of Gd. Bassa, Margibi, Bong and Nimba counties.
- Contributed to the national coffers the amounts of US\$15,900.00 (FIFTEEN THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED UNITED STATES DOLLARS) and L\$102,600.00 (ONE HUNDRED & TWO THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED LIBERIAN DOLLARS) from fines imposed on offenders.
- From the inspection conducted between Aug. 22, 2016 thru Sept. 22, 2016, of a total of 426 business inspected, 114 business were found to be in non-compliance in the areas covered. This suggests that these quarterly inspections must be conducted as scheduled to ensure that revenue collection is maximized.

### 5.3 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.



## 5.4 National Standards Laboratory

### Overview

In 2016, the NSL conducted its routine activities and provided services to the business community and general public in support of quality assurance and testing for standards compliance. Much has been achieved towards the full accreditation of the NSL by the International Standards Organization (ISO). This is reflected in the account of activities given below.

### Activity Highlights:

- The National Standards Laboratory has expanded weights and measures calibration services to include scales and weigh bridges. Presently scales at supermarkets, airports and meat shops are being verified for compliance with the Liberian business law. The NSL has now an existing MOU with the Bureau of Maritime for verifying weigh bridges of shipping agencies.
- The NSL is now providing quality assurance monitoring services for implementation of the National food fortification standards.
- On behalf of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and in partnership with EPA, the National Genetically Modified Organisms Laboratory was launched at the National Standards Laboratory. The GMO laboratory will have the primary responsibility of monitoring GMO products within the commerce of Liberia. This includes the testing of seeds and plants.

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

### Overview

The DID&CS supervises development in the industrial sector by implementing the regulations and policies governing the sector, as well as, monitoring the sector to ensure compliance to relevant policies and laws. The division also provides guidelines and technical assistance as requested from economic operators in the industrial sector.

### Activity Highlights:

- Crafting of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) with the National Standard Laboratory (NSL). The GMP will serve as a regulatory tool when adopted by the (SMT).

- Participated in the planning and implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Industrial Compliance workshop.
- Assisted in the coordination of UNDP project that led to the hiring of five (5) Consultants to conduct critical assessment of the industrial sector and make key recommendations for policy implementation.
- Succeeded in obtaining two (2) donated used vehicles and one (1) new vehicle from the UNDP.
- Supervised the Oil Palm working Group under the National Export Strategy (NES) which serve as a forum for consultation among concessionaires, smallholders and Government stakeholders.
- Crafted the oil palm mill project proposal for Bong and Lofa
- Crafted the oil palm project M&E Plan:
- Served as a member of the WTO technical working group focused on Liberia's WTO accession and post accession plan implementation:
- Traveled to Sweden for the WTO Trade Policy course and obtained a certificate
- Participated in the National Fire Service (NFS) inter-ministerial committee, called the fire preventive committee.
- Served on anti-piracy committee to ensure trademark compliance
- Visited 50 existing industrial enterprises with diverse nature of production
- Coordinated the establishment of UNIDO Resource Center for Training and Development

## 6.0 BUREAU OF SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



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

### 6.1 Overview

The Bureau of Small Business Administration (SBA) was established with the passage of the Small Business Empowerment Act by the National Legislature in December 2014. The mandate of the SBA is 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 and creating the enabling legal and regulatory environment. The Bureau succeeded in implementing the provision of the law that requires 25% of all government procurement be set aside for Liberian-owned businesses. The Small Business Administration also has the responsibility of transitioning businesses from the informal sector to the formal sector.

### 6.2 Activity Highlights

In accordance with the SBA mandate, the Bureau achieved in many areas but key among them are as follows:

- **Successfully hosted the SBA 2016 MSME Conference:**

- 1000 participants. Including major sponsors, partners, investors, policy makers, the national legislature, other government ministries and agencies, diplomatic corps and foreign guests.
- 110 Liberian-Owned Businesses who exhibited their products and services, ranging from Catering, Processing, Textile, agribusiness and Rubber Wood Furniture.
- Created market opportunities, business linkages, and experience sharing among MSMEs with eight (8) SMEs winning various awards (cash/kind) for their outstanding performances at the conference ranging from **Best Booth Presentation, Best Marketing and pricing, Most Innovative and Proudly Liberian** for both trade fair exhibitors and rubber wood furniture competition.
- Awarded cash prize of US\$10,000 each to the first E+ graduates of 10 young Liberians after an intense business plan competition conducted by MoCI, IFC, BSC Monrovia and SPARK's.
- **Monitored the implementation of the SBA 25% Procurement Law:**
  - About US\$42.6 million was contracted to Liberian owned MSMEs, including real estate owners and individual consultants for FY 2015/16
  - Held consultative meetings with MACs and the Liberian MSMEs on data collection and implementation of the Law.
- **Expansion of the Liberia Market Place to the Nancy B. Doe Market**
  - Remodeled the top of the Nancy B. Doe Market on 5<sup>th</sup> street to host the Liberian Marketplace originally on 3<sup>rd</sup> street
  - Over 50 Liberian-Owned MSMEs are being hosted. This facility provides the necessary market opportunity for SMEs to run their own business operations.
  - A farmer's market is held every 2<sup>nd</sup> and last Saturday of each month
- **Construction of Lofa Women Weaving Center**
  - Conceived in March 2014 and located in Kolahun, Lofa County
  - Weaving facility for weavers and designers of textiles aimed at promoting, among other things, cottage industry and value addition in rural communities
  - 25 acres of land procured and deeded
  - Working with Bureau of Industrial Services to ensure project is completed no later than December 2017.



H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf views some of the products being displayed at MSME Conference



H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf confers with one of the participants of the MSME Conference (2016)



H.E., President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, escorted by the Minister of Commerce & Industry, Hon. Axel M. Addy arriving at the MSME Conference Dinner where distinguished Liberian entrepreneurs received awards.

### 6.3 Petty Traders Registry

During the period under review 2016, the Division of Petty Trade Unit within the Bureau of Small Business Administration registered a total of five hundred and three (503) Petty Traders.

The Unit categorized the registrations and payments of petty trader as follows:

- Category      C:      Petty trader (market table);  
                   B:      Petty trader (market table not under the LMA)  
                   A:      Petty trader (street/community booths)

The Unit also categorized the registration by gender and reports three hundred and sixty one (361) Male Petty Traders, one hundred forty two (142) Female Petty Traders were registered, accounting for the total of 503.

The Unit in performing its duties, as a GoL revenue generating unit, generated the sub-total of LD\$1,207,200.00 (one million two hundred seven thousand two hundred dollars) for both genders in category “A”; while the amounts of L\$187,200.00 and L\$22,560.00 respectively, were generated for categories “B” and “C”.

A total of L\$4,200.00 was generated from penalties imposed for non-compliance.

As displayed in the chart below, a total of L\$1,416,960.00 (ONE MILLION FOUR HUNDRED & SIXTEEN THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED & SIXTY LIBERIAN DOLLARS) was generated by the Petty Traders Registry for the year 2016.

LIBERIAN OWNED				
No.	Kind of Business	2016		
		QTY	UNIT FEE	TOTAL AMOUNT
1	C	47	480.00	22,560.00
2	B	156	1,200.00	187,200.00
3	A	503	2,400.00	1,207,200.00
Total				<b>1,416,960.00</b>

**PUBLICATION INFORMATION**

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For More Information Contact:

Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Public Affairs

3rd Floor, Ashmun Street

Monrovia, Liberia

or

visit our website at: **WWW.MOCI.GOV.LR**