



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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**LIBERIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION REINFORCE POLITICAL RELATIONS
MAY 17, 2016**

The Government of the Republic of Liberia and the European Union met on May 17, 2016 for the Fourth EU-Liberia Political Dialogue. Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States) establishes a regular and comprehensive political dialogue leading to commitments on both sides. The Dialogue was formally launched in June 2012.

The Liberian Delegation was headed by H. E. Ms. Marjon V. Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs, whilst H. E. Ms. Tiina Intelmann, Ambassador/Head of the European Union Delegation to Liberia led the European side.

The Dialogue focused on the theme: ***“Conditions for Peace and Economic Growth”***, covering a wide range of issues including the justice and security sector, human rights, the 2017 Presidential and Legislative Elections, the Liberian economy, development strategies and the investment climate. Recent developments in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union were also discussed, along with EU-Liberia trade relations and global challenges such as climate change and migration. Both parties agreed to continue efforts to establish a mechanism for the issuance of Schengen visa in Liberia.

Political and Security Matters:

Both parties recognized that peace and security are germane to governance and development. The European Union expressed confidence in the Liberian Government's ability to take full responsibility for its own security following UNMIL drawdown in June 2016. Both parties agreed to continue collaboration on justice and security sector reform and on the importance of appropriate resource allocation for the justice and security sector. They also shared views and concerns on the current security situation and further affirmed their willingness to continue dialogue on issues of shared concern, such as counter-terrorism.

Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Both parties acknowledged the significant progress made in building and strengthening institutions and putting in place processes to protect and promote human rights. The European Union urged Liberia to do more to meet the commitments it has made internationally and to the people of Liberia, particularly on sexual and gender based violence and expressed its hope for the swift passage of the Domestic Violence Act, without amendment. Both parties agreed on the

importance of good governance as well as strong anti-corruption measures, including credible investigations and prosecutions by the relevant Liberian authorities.

The 2017 Presidential and Legislative Elections: Both sides recognized the 2017 elections as a key moment in Liberia's post-conflict history. The Liberian side provided an update on the preparatory works including the financial and legislative requirements for smooth elections. Both sides expressed confidence in the National Elections Commission and recounted Liberia's recent track record of peaceful, free and fair elections. The European Union recalled its significant support already provided through the 10 million Euro commitment for the 2015-2018 Electoral Cycle support project as well as its budget support to the Government of Liberia. Both parties further agreed to continue dialogue on electoral issues.

ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) Developments: Liberia highlighted recent developments within the ECOWAS and the AU, including successful elections held in ECOWAS member states of Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger. Discussions also covered the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and the transition of leadership at the AU. The European Union recounted recent changes in funding for the African Peace Facility and highlighted that migration issues remain one of the EU's priorities.

Economic and Trade Issues:

The Liberian side enumerated austerity measures adopted to respond to budget deficit as well as those instituted to diversify the economy and stimulate growth in light of the grim impact of the Ebola Virus Disease and the fall in global commodity prices. The Liberian side recounted measures taken to secure long term development by expanding economic growth and private sector investment, including in the agriculture sector through value-addition. The European Union welcomed these efforts and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Liberia through direct grant budget support, advising that a budget support disbursement of up to €16.5 million has recently been approved by Brussels. Both parties agreed to hold a regular comprehensive dialogue on all aspects of budget support.

Investment Climate: Liberia recalled measures instituted to improve the investment climate, including ratification of the Protocol on World Trade Organization (WTO) accession and other legislation linked to the accession process. The EU welcomed this progress and expressed willingness to continue engagement on issues of importance to current and potential European investors, including predictable application of regulations and actions against corruption at all levels. Regarding bilateral trade matters, Liberia expressed commitment to regional trade initiatives under the EU-ECOWAS Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Both sides expressed satisfaction with the positive impact of the EU-Liberia Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on forestry management and looked forward to the first meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee for the EU-Liberia Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement.

Development Cooperation: Liberia recounted the mid-term review of the Agenda for Transformation which offered a great opportunity to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the African Union Agenda 2063 and Liberia's Vision 2030. The EU welcomed the single framework approach for improved coordination and building synergy in development plans.

Climate Change: Both sides recognized the importance of the historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change and called for ratification by United Nations Member States. Liberia hailed the EU's decision to allocate 6 million Euros from the Global Climate Change Alliance to support climate change and environmental related activities in Liberia.

Schengen visa: Both parties agreed to work on modalities for the issuance of Schengen visas in Liberia. The European Union acknowledged the current challenges facing Liberians in securing visas and committed itself to exploring all possible options to mitigate the problem.

PARTICIPANTS TO THE 4TH EU-LIBERIA POLITICAL DIALOGUE

LIBERIAN DELEGATION

H.E. Ms. Marjon V. Kamara	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Bioma S. Kamara	Ministry of Finance & Development Planning
Hon. Axel M. Addy	Minister of Commerce and Industry
Cllr. Wheatonia Dixon-Barnes	Acting Minister, Ministry of Justice
Hon. James F. Kollie, PhD	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance & Development Planning
Hon. Yah Zolia	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Hon. Sizi Z. Subah	Deputy Minister for Technical Service/Ministry of Agriculture
Hon. C. A. Lamin Lighe	Executive Director, National Elections Commission
Hon. Etmonia D. Tarpeh	Chairman, National Investment Commission
Hon. Harrison S. Karnwea	Managing Director, Forestry Development Authority
Hon. Z. Elijah Whapoe	Manager, Planning & Policy, Environmental Protection Agency
Hon. Peter F. Zaizay	DCA /BIN/LIS (Bureau of Immigration & Naturalization)
Cllr. Abla Gadebgeku Williams	Executive Director, Liberia Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission

EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION

H.E. Ms. Tiina Intelmann	Ambassador/Head of EU Delegation
H. E. Mr. Ralph Timmermann	Ambassador of Germany
H. E. Mr. Joël Godeau	Ambassador of France
Ms. Keane Clyde	Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of the United Kingdom/ Deputy Head

of Sahel & West Africa Team, FCO

H.E. Ms. Lena Nordström

Ambassador of Sweden

Ms. Emma Sundblad

Political Counsellor European Union Delegation