

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Monrovia, Liberia

PRESS STATEMENT

BY

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DIRECTOR GENERAL, FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

AT

MICAT REGULAR MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2024

Hon. Minister

Officials of the Ministry of Information

Members of the fourth Estate

We are pleased to avail ourselves of this opportunity to engage the media today and to share with the Liberian people the important work that is being done at the Gabriel L. Dennis Foreign Service Institute since we were privileged to have been appointed by the President of Liberia, His. Excellency Joseph Nyumah Boakai. In this public manner, we want to thank the president for his preferment and will endeavor to work very hard to justify the confidence that he has reposed in us.

For the benefit of the record, the Gabriel L. Dennis Foreign Service Institute (FSI) was established during the administration of President William V.S. Tubman who saw the need to Liberianize the diplomacy of the country. In 1946, a legislation to create the Liberian Foreign Service Institute was enacted by an Act of the National Legislature. Under the Foreign Service Act of February 16, 1951, Section (31), the 41st. Legislature, passed the Act establishing the Gabriel L. Dennis Foreign Service Institute (FSI), as a professional training center for young men and women who wish to become diplomats in the Foreign Service of the Republic of Liberia.

The FSI was named in honor of the 23rd Secretary of State at the time, Hon. Gabriel L. Dennis, through whose efforts eleven brilliant Liberians were trained by the Americans

Government in Washington D. C. in the 1940s, and eventually became the bedrock of Liberia’s foreign policy and helped to groom the Foreign Service Institute into the prestigious institution that it has become today.

The core mission of the FSI are to acquaint the students with the core skills of the diplomatic profession including effective, oral and written communication, lucid reporting negotiating skills, management and supervision;

To inculcate the habits of pleasant and logical thinking, satisfactory judgment and

analytical ability;

To create the sense of awareness in developing understanding of other cultures, and the application to promote personal and interpersonal human association and contacts; while remaining truly committed to their own social conscience and cultural linkages;

To enhance acceptable societal values, morals, patriotism and esprit-de-corps;

To build the qualities of imaginable creativity, trust-worthiness, and Professional

commitment.

To establish and develop an effective language study program such as French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Arabic.

To strengthen the Institute to become a future Think-Tank or reservoir of knowledge and initiator of new concepts on International Relations and Cooperation between the

Government of Liberia and other governments, particularly those on the African Continent, to establish and develop an organizational structure as well as the Management Functions of the Institution.

The mandate of the Director General of the Foreign Service Institute found on page 23, Section 2.9 (A) of the Foreign Service Manual, is to establish courses of instructions on policies, procedures, methods, and systems of management controls as well as on approaches to pursuing Liberia’s foreign policy objectives, improving relations with other countries, and reporting on systems of management controls and strategic planning and reviews.

The Foreign Service Institute is semi-autonomous in order to enhance smooth functioning and operations in an academic setting. Hence, the FSI is audited separately from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

STATUS OF THE FSI

Upon our assuming the management of the about two and a half months ago, we found out that it had been dormant for more than a year for reasons that are not important to discuss at this press engagement.

Nonetheless, we embarked on a mission to revitalize the institute in terms of management, proficiency of the staff, the structure and the curriculum, thereby placing it on a trajectory to justify its legacy as a prestigious institute to be competitive with any other Foreign Service Institute around the world.

In so doing, we are pursuing the process to obtain accreditation from the High Commission on Education in line with our objective to offer Master’s degree opportunity to students after receiving a post graduate diploma from the FSI.

We are in the process of entering into Memoranda of Understanding with other local institutions offering studies in foreign relations and diplomacy, in addition to renewing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Foreign Service Institutes around the world to promote the exchange of instructors and students and create an atmosphere for the cross fertilization of ideas.

In terms of academics, we are currently offering a **4-week Orientation/Refresher Course** for newly appointed officials and designated staff of Government Ministries and Agencies. Minimum academic requirement is BA or Bsc degree. No entrance exam is required. An Executive Certificate is awarded at the conclusion of the program. …/2

We see this program as important in order to harmonize the knowledge of mid to senior level officers of government who are likely to encounter foreign visitors or travel abroad to conferences and meetings. The focus of this program will include

Intensive subjects such as:

1. Liberia Diplomatic History
2. Concept of Economic Diplomacy

3. Diplomatic practices and principles

4. Principles and practices of protocol and etiquette

5. Introduction to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

6. Diplomatic Communications

7. The Liberian Embassy and its Functions

8. Ranks of Ambassador/Accreditations

9. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic and Consular Rights, Privileges Immunities

10. The operations and functions of the Liberian government.

The primary course is an 11-month Academic Training Program. Minimum academic requirement is BA or Bsc degree. Applicants are required to sit an exam followed by an interview by a panel of instructors before admission. A three-semester program is followed by the award of a Post Graduate Diploma for successful candidates. Courses offered under this program will include:

- Diplomacy & Diplomatic Practices & Ceremonies

- Public Diplomacy

- Diplomatic Case Study

- Diplomatic Communications, Protocol & Etiquette

- International and Regional Organizations

- Elements of International Relations I

- Embassy Financial Management & Reporting I

- Economic & Developmental Diplomacy I

- Liberia Diplomatic History & Foreign Policy Since 1847

- Languages: French, Spanish, Chinese

- International Law & Consular Practices I

- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

- International Marketing & Finance

- Leadership Skills, Self Esteem & Motivation

- International Security, Terrorism and Cyber Awareness

**Establishment of the Madam Suakoko Graduate School for Female Diplomats**

The capstone of our vision for the Foreign Service Institute is the establishment of the Madam Suakoko Graduate School for Female Diplomats. We are therefore seeking collaboration with our development partners to concretize the concept, develop a structure, establish curriculum, and source funding in support of this important pioneering endeavor.

As you all may know, (Nyen - Suah – Koko) Madam Suakoko, a national icon and indefatigable legend in Liberian history. She was born c. 1850, died c. 1934.

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She is believed to be the first woman Liberian tribal chief and warrior who fought several battles against the expansionary Liberia Frontier Force before entering negotiations to grant accession of the territory she ruled over to the Liberian government. She contributed greatly to peace, security and academia by granting passage and assistance to a large delegation of Harvard University researchers who visited Liberia in 1926 to conduct scientific research on tropical diseases.

The rationale behind the project is firstly informed on the imperative to galvanize the justifiable aspirations to accelerate the ascendance of Liberian women in consonance with the global Female Foreign Policy initiatives, to higher decision-making bodies, and particularly to the male-dominated First Estate.

We are excited about this project given the statistics we have obtained since we started registration for the new academic year that begins in early October, 2024.

Gabriel L. Dennis Foreign Service Institute

Demographic Report on Enrollment

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Profile** | **Description** | **No.** | **Percentage** |
| Gender of Student | Male | 60 | 44.7% |
| Female | 74 | 55.22% |
|  |  |  |  |
| Age of Student | 25-35 | 43 | 32.08% |
| 36-50 | 89 | 66.41% |
| Over 50 | 2 | 1.49% |
|  |  |  |  |
| Education  Of Student | BSc | 93 | 69.40% |
| MSc | 41 | 30.59% |
| PhD | 0 | 0% |
|  |  |  |  |
| Employment  Of Student | Private Sector | 60 | 44.77% |
| Self employed | 12 | 8.9 |
| Public Sector | 60 | 44.77% |
| Unemployed | 4 | 2.98% |



**Warrior Chief Madam Suakoko**

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In order to justify the status of the FSI as a Think Tank and repository of knowledge, history and international affairs, we are positioning our institute as one of the top research institutions in Africa. A Summary of proposed topics for Research and Case Study include but not limited to:

* 1. The Sanniquellie Conference that gave rise to the OAU, now AU, with a focus of the dynamics of the Monrovia versus the Casablanca Group
  2. The role of Liberia in settling the Congo crisis and participating in one of the first peacekeeping operations on the continent.
  3. Liberia’s role in the settlement of the Biafra (Nigeria) civil war
  4. Liberia’s role in the Non-aligned Movement
  5. Liberia’s fight against Apartheid, and the hosting of Nelson Mandela in Monrovia
  6. Liberia’s support to the liberation movements across Africa, (1950s – 1975) eg.
     1. African National Congress, ANC
     2. Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzania)
     3. FRELIMO (Mozambique)
     4. MPLA (Angola)
     5. SWAPO (Namibia)
     6. ZAPU AND ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe)

* 1. Liberia’s role/signatory in the creation of international and regional organizations such as
     1. The League of Nations
     2. The United Nations and its key agencies
     3. The Economic Community of West African States
     4. The Mano River Union
  2. Annexation of Liberia’s territory by the British and French empires in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
  3. The 1979 Rice Riots
  4. The 1980 military coup d’état
  5. The Liberian civil war(s)
  6. Peace keeping operations of the UN and ECOWAS
  7. The various peace initiatives culminating in the Accra Peace Talks
  8. Liberia’s role in ending the EBOLA pandemic and lessons learned on how to deal with future pandemics
  9. Liberia’s efforts in containing the COVID-19 pandemic, lessons learned.
  10. The foreign policy under various Liberian presidents with focus on
      1. President Joseph Jenkins Roberts
      2. President Edwin J. Barclay
      3. President William V.S. Tubman
      4. President William R. Tolbert, Jr.
      5. President Samuel K. Doe
      6. President Charles Ghankay Taylor
      7. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
      8. President George Manneh Weah
      9. President Joseph N. Boakai

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We will be relying on corporate entities and friends of Liberia to fund these research activities so that the historic role that Liberia played as the Mother of African diplomacy, and the founding of all of the major regional and international organizations is not lost.

Additionally, our goal is to establish a robust and well equipped library that will cater to the needs of not only faculty and students of the FSI, but students and instructors from other institutions around the country.

Finally, with the assistance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the FSI aspires to gain Observer Status at meetings and conferences of regional and international organizations, much like other Foreign Service Institutes such as the International Relations Institute of Cameroun. This will enable the FSI to be a watch dog on the attendance, participation and performance of Liberian diplomats and Foreign Service personnel at these conferences. In this way, the FSI will codify all reports of Liberia’s representatives’ participation and position on critical international issues.

The year 2025 marks the (75th Anniversary or Diamond Jubilee) of the Gabriel L. Dennis Foreign Service Institute. It is our plan for the celebration this milestone, to which Foreign Service institutes from all across Africa and elsewhere with which the FSI enjoys amity relations. A renowned international statesman and diplomat will be invited to be the keynote anniversary speaker.

The purpose of this occasion will be to establish an Annual Foreign Service Symposium to be hosted in Monrovia for the cross fertilization of ideas in international relations from the African perspective. We hope to bring together the best minds on African diplomacy and international relations to craft a unique concept on how our continent and individual nations cope with the fast moving trends on critical issues such as climate change, gender diversity, the realignment of global polarity, the developing situation in the Sahel region and implications for West African economic and political development and solidarity; the issues of poverty and economic growth and the future of our continent in the 21st century.

We want to once again thank the president of Liberia, His. Excellency Joseph Nyumah Boakai, for his keen interest in the viability of the Foreign Service Institute as a critical part of the ARREST Agenda. As you know a strong and viable domestic policy drives a robust and vibrant foreign policy.

We also want to thank the Vice President, Hon. Jeremiah Kpan Koung, for being the first high government official to submit officers and staff from his office to be trained at the Foreign Service Institute. It is our hope that other agencies in the three branches of government will emulate the noble endeavor of the Vice President.

