

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA AND THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES PRESENT**

**LIBERIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION REAFFIRM THEIR STRONG POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP**

**IN THE 12TH EU - LIBERIA PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE**

Monrovia, August 13, 2024

The Government of the Republic of Liberia (GoL) and the European Union (EU) met on **13 August 2024** for the **12th EU-Liberia Partnership Dialogue**.

The Dialogue was co-chaired by H. E. Sara Beysolow Nyanti, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, and Ambassador Nona Deprez, Head of the EU Delegation to Liberia. The Government of Liberia was represented by H.E Sara Beysolow Nyanti, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Honorable Natu Oswald Tweh, Minister of Justice; Honorable Amin Modad, Minister of Commerce and Industry; Honorable Jeronlinmek Matthew Piah, Minister of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism; Professor Alaric K. Tokpa, Acting Chairman of the Governance Commission; Honorable P. Garswa Jackson, Auditor General; Honorable Davidetta Browne-Lansanah, Chairperson of the National Elections Commission; Honorable Ansu Dulleh, Director-General of the National Disaster Management Agency; Honorable Mohammed Ali, Managing Director, Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation; Honorable Emmanuel Urey Yarkpawolo, Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency; Honorable Rudolph Merab, Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority; Honorable Bodger Scott Johnson, Executive Director, Public Procurement and Concession Commission; Honorable Dehpue Zuo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning; Honorable Laura Golakeh, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection; Honorable Jocelia Jaywloh Taplah, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Public Works; Honorable Samuel G. Toe, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education; Honorable Laraamand Nyonton, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Youth and Sports; Honorable Seiwon T. Seidi, Deputy Director, Internal Audit Agency. Representatives from the following agencies were also present: Liberia Electricity Corporation; Liberia Telecommunication Authority; Liberia Revenue Authority; and Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission

The EU Member States present were represented by the Ambassador of Sweden H.E. Mr. Urban Sjöström, Ambassador of Germany H.E. Mr. Jakob Haselhuber, the Ambassador of France H.E. Ms. Isabelle Le Guellec; the Ambassador of Ireland H.E. Mr. Gerard Considine; and representative of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, Ms. Naomi Tuinstra.

The civil society and private sector were represented by Mr. Malcolm W. Joseph, Chairperson of the Election Coordinating Committee; Mr. O. Natty B. Davis, President of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce; Madame Eyvonne Bright-Denis, Member of the Board of Directors of the Liberia Business Association.

The dialogue addressed key issues of bilateral cooperation of mutual interest, shared values, and a deliberate commitment to future development cooperation locally, regionally, and multilaterally.

1. **Liberia-EU Bilateral Development Cooperation**

The Government of Liberia (GoL) thanked the European Union (EU) for being one of its major partners in development cooperation. The GoL reaffirmed its commitment to work with the EU to tackle global challenges and sustainable development. EU stressed that **Team Europe (EU + Member States)** **remains committed to support the implementation of the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development**, delivering to the people of Liberia. The EU side raised its clear expectations of good governance and transparency. The EU has earmarked 191 million euros to Liberia for the first phase its support program (2021 to 2027). Both sides agreed to continue cooperation on areas of mutual interests in line with the GoL national development plan which is currently being developed through broad-base national consultations. In this connection, the EU will support the GoL in achieving its development objectives under the three priority areas of the EU Multi-Annual Indicative Programme: 1) Enhancing and preserving natural resources for growth; 2) Promoting decent jobs and inclusive growth; and 3) Improving financial and democratic governance.

1. **Democracy, Good Governance, and the Rule of Law**

GoL confirmed its devotion to uphold the Rule of Law which is fundamental to guaranteeing good governance and a vibrant democracy. Upon invitation by GoL, EU in 2023 launched an independent **Electoral Observation Mission (EOM)** to Liberia, and a follow-up mission on 4-6 March 2024. The EU commended Liberia for the peaceful conduct of the 2023 General and Presidential Elections, and encouraged GoL to review and implement the recommendations of the EU EOM Final Report and reports of other observation missions. Both sides acknowledged the positive step taken in the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman, to ensure that the 2014 Act Prescribing a National Code of Conduct for All Public Officials and Employees of the Government of Liberia is upheld and enforced, and encouraged citizens to make full use of the Office of the Ombudsman to receive and investigate any complaints.

The EU welcomed the GoL’s decision for the **active participation of Civil Society Organizations** in the 12th EU-Liberia Partnership Dialogue. This was another evidence of the open and free democratic society in Liberia which can serve as an inspiration for other countries.

Both parties stressed the need for an active inclusion of the Liberian Civil Society in all areas of policy making, in particular transitional justice.

The GoL noted that the establishment of the Office of War and Economic Crimes Court to facilitate the establishment of a War and Economic Crimes Court to prosecute alleged perpetrators of war and economic crimes was a testimony to its devotion to the rule of law and criminal accountability for violations committed during the country’s civil war. The EU and its Member States commended Executive Order No. 131 establishing the Office of **War and Economic Crimes Court** for Liberia signed by His Excellency President Joseph Boakai on 2nd May 2024 and welcomed decisions taken by the Government and Legislature of Liberia which contribute to the implementation the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The EU urged, in the strongest terms, the GoL and its Office of War and Economic Crimes Court to work actively with all relevant strands of the Liberian civil society, human rights defenders and legal experts to tap into the vast knowledge and experience accumulated over the past two decades.

Both sides agreed to work more firmly in strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law through initiatives that enhance good governance while promoting transparency and accountability. GoL shared its vision to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to promote decentralized governance utilizing digital technology.

**3. Human Rights**

The GoL expressed its commitment to fulfill international treaty obligations on Women’s and Children’s Rights, developing gender-sensitive policies and strategies including the national gender policy. GoL also indicated that it is drafting the 3rd revised national human rights action plan for 2025-2030 and has reactivated its Steering Committee. The EU recognized the GoL’s commitment to comply with Liberia’s international **Human Rights** obligations. Both sides agreed to follow up to the current conclusions of the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** ahead of its fourth session on Liberia. A particular emphasis was placed on continuing the fight against the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to which Liberian women and girls are exposed. On the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM), both parties welcomed the decisions taken by the National Council of Traditional Chiefs and Elders of Liberia (NACCEL), and the Traditional Chiefs and Elders of Liberia in February 2022 to suspend throughout Liberia the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The EU and its Member States remain committed to continue working with Government of Liberia, its institutions and the traditional communities, chiefs and elders to support the full implementation of this decision. Both sides agreed to work together to ensure respect for diversity and non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

1. **Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability**

GoL expressed its commitment to identify climate change actions that would ensure environmental sustainability in Liberia to protect and manage the environment. GOL highlighted key climate change actions it intends to embark on in the short and medium terms:

* National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCSC): Sectoral Policy platform to provide strategic guidance for climate change programs in the country;
* National Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy;
* National Adaptation Plan (NAP);
* Liberia’s Revised Nationally Determined Contributions (2021): 60% emission reduction by 2030; mitigation and adaptation targets targeting six sectors;
* Second National Communication: Reporting on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Vulnerability Assessment, Climate scenario, training, research and public awareness;
* Preparing a Road Map to commence work of a framework for the operationalization of the Carbon Trading Mechanism in Liberia (Forestry Sector) in fulfillment of Article 6 of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement;
* Preparing a National Road Map to commence the preparation of Third Generation NDC in 2025 under the Paris Agreement; and
* Establishment of County Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) and hubs to decentralize the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA): To deal with disaster-related issues especially climate-induced disasters (Flood) at the local government level.

The EU welcomed the commitment in Liberia’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) while expressing strong concern over the rapid rate of deforestation. The EU informed about the European Union Deforestation Regulation to verify that products purchased within the EU have not contributed to deforestation and forest degradation. Only certified timber and agricultural products will have access to the European market. Both sides agreed to strengthen their collaboration on environmental sustainability and to continue to act together through the Liberian national development plan and **“Team Europe initiatives” in two priority sectors: “Safe and Sustainable Food Systems” and “Forestry and Biodiversity”**.

1. **Regional, Continental, and Global Peace and Security**

The Republic of Liberia updated on its candidature to the United Nations Security Council for the biennium 2026-2027. Both sides had an exchange on their **strong and active foreign policy cooperation between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia built on shared values**, and their joint efforts multilaterally and regionally to promote peace, human rights, the values of liberal democracy and respect for international rule of law. Both sides recall that in full respect of the UN Charter and International Law, all states must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state. Both parties expressed deep concerns about the wave of armed conflicts around the world and call on the United Nations Security Council and other international bodies to step up efforts to bring an end to these wars, and to support civilians with humanitarian aid. The parties commit to support efforts aimed at resolving ongoing conflicts, including the armed conflicts in the Sahel region of West Africa, Sudan, the Israel-Gaza conflict, and Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The EU welcomed the GoL initiative to host a Mano River Union conference in view of strengthening **regional integration, stability, trade and development in ECOWAS** and the sub-region.

1. **Trade, Investment & Economic Cooperation**

Both sides agreed to work to improve the **business and investment climate**, the regulatory environment, transparency and economic governance to facilitate the establishment of more private companies and create more jobs in Liberia. This could facilitate the use of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFDS+) instrument, with a provision of 3 million euros, and thereby contribute to further investments. The EU will launch, in 2025, a 25 million euro program on private sector development to support these efforts.

1. **Cultural Exchange, Youth Employment, Education, Entrepreneurship, and Skills Development**

The GoL and Team Europe shared their strategic goal of improving **Technical and vocational education training (TVET)** to invest in youth skills development and matching the supply and demand on the labor market to **contribute to new jobs for Liberian youth**. Both sides agreed to expand support, expecting to impact the entire TVET national system, with agriculture and entrepreneurship as key priorities. Team Europe will continue to offer **fully funded scholarship opportunities** for Liberian youth, such as the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master program.

1. **Infrastructure, Technology and Connectivity**

Both sides recognized the need to improve connectivity between Liberia and other ECOWAS countries to further integration and economic development. . The EU’s “**Global Gateway**” initiative is a positive EU investment offer which may support smart, clean and secure investments in quality infrastructure while connecting goods, people and services. The GoL welcomed the 52 million euro support of the EU to the **expansion of electricity infrastructure** in Liberia. The EU has contributed to connect 42 000 households. With another 42 million euros, both sides will provide 17,064 new households, 1,442 businesses and public institutions in Grand Bassa, Sinoe and Grand Kru counties access to electricity.