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LIBERIA Exhibit

J A N U A R Y - J U N E 2 0 1 9

ISSUE 1

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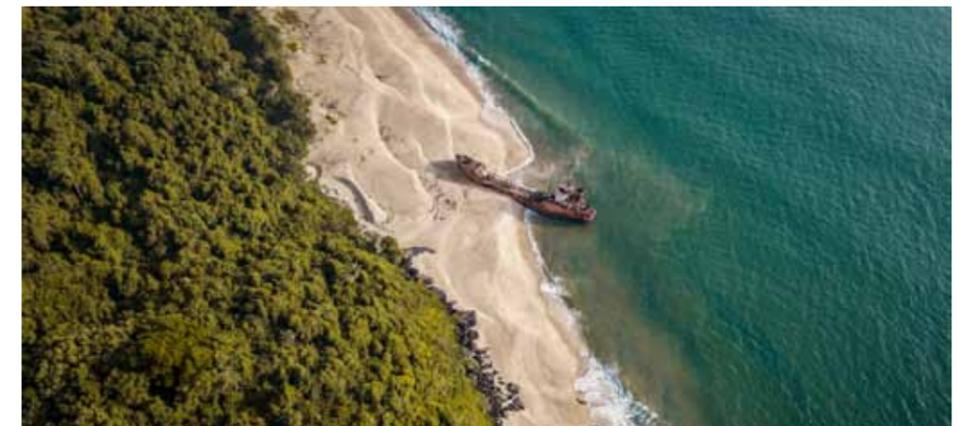
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Silvanus J Dorbor & Joma Barleah Are two young Liberians in the field of photography and computer graphics. They are few of the emerging photographers in Liberia with the dream of putting their skills into action and also putting Liberia on the map in the line of photography and artistic works

TOURISM

The Other Economic Growth Linchpin

Liberia is endowed with birth taking natural beauty ranging from luxuriant spectacular white-sand beaches, pristine mountains and vast green forest that exude all of the uniqueness that would engender broader economic growth. Disappointingly, the tourism sector is given little or no attention despite its far-reaching labor intensity and undiminished fountain of revenue and a trump card to economic diversification.

According to Africa's Growth Initiative 2018 report, by 2030, consumer spending on tourism, hospitality, and recreation in Africa is projected to reach about \$261.77 billion.

Aware of the potential for tourism, most countries on the continent have already drafted strategic plans to develop the sector as an economic opportunity and development catalyst. For example, Gambia, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania are all putting significant efforts into advancing travel and tourism development. Botswana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and South Africa are particularly working hard to improve their business environment for tourism investment.

With Liberia's huge tourism assets, the need to put energy in the sector cannot be overemphasized especially now that the George Weah led government is looking towards transcending aid reliance to robust domestic resource mobilization. Tourism is undoubtedly the magic wine

There are a number of mechanisms to account for tourism's positive contribution to the economy. For one thing, tourism provides much-needed diversification of countries' export earnings away from a dependence on agricultural and primary commodities, thereby contributing to broader patterns of economic modernization. Meanwhile, in comparison to other economic sectors, such as manufacturing, the tourism industry requires relatively low levels of inputs of capital and expertise—resources that tend to be scarce in developing economies—thereby creating an abundance of space for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to thrive.

AGI opined in its 2018 report that there are also substantial benefits from tourism that accrue at the local level, including improvements in income distribution, regional development, and employment opportunities for remote and low-skilled workers, which both directly and indirectly impacting poverty levels. Compared to other sectors, tourism also provides a disproportionately high number of jobs for women, who are often difficult to integrate into the formal economy in developing countries. Corroboratively, a recent study by the U.N. World Tourism Organization concluded that, in the global hotel and restaurant industry, women often outnumber men and receive equal pay.

The growing quest for adventure tourism, eco-tourism, the country's unique linkages with US market, intra-regional tourism and the increasing number of international visitors from emerging economies puts Liberia in a favorable position to utilize the full potential of the tourism sector.

Besides being a source of revenue, tourism plays a pivotal role bolstering local economy principally because when tourists visit a country, they would put money directly into the local economy by their spending on food, patronize local saloons, clothing, pay hotels bills and those monies are spent in the local economy; thus eradicating poverty. This means, the right programs that would attract tourists to Liberia means they will be coming with their monies and those monies will have a direct economic benefit for all Liberians.

Hence, we strongly believe that tourism is the other economic growth linchpin whose potential will go a long way in helping the Government of Liberia endeavors to diversify the country's economy.

Tourism contributes towards complete growth and development of a country; one, by bringing numerous economic value & benefits; and, second, helping in build country's brand value, image & identity. Tourism industry goes beyond attractive destinations, to being an important economic growth contributor.



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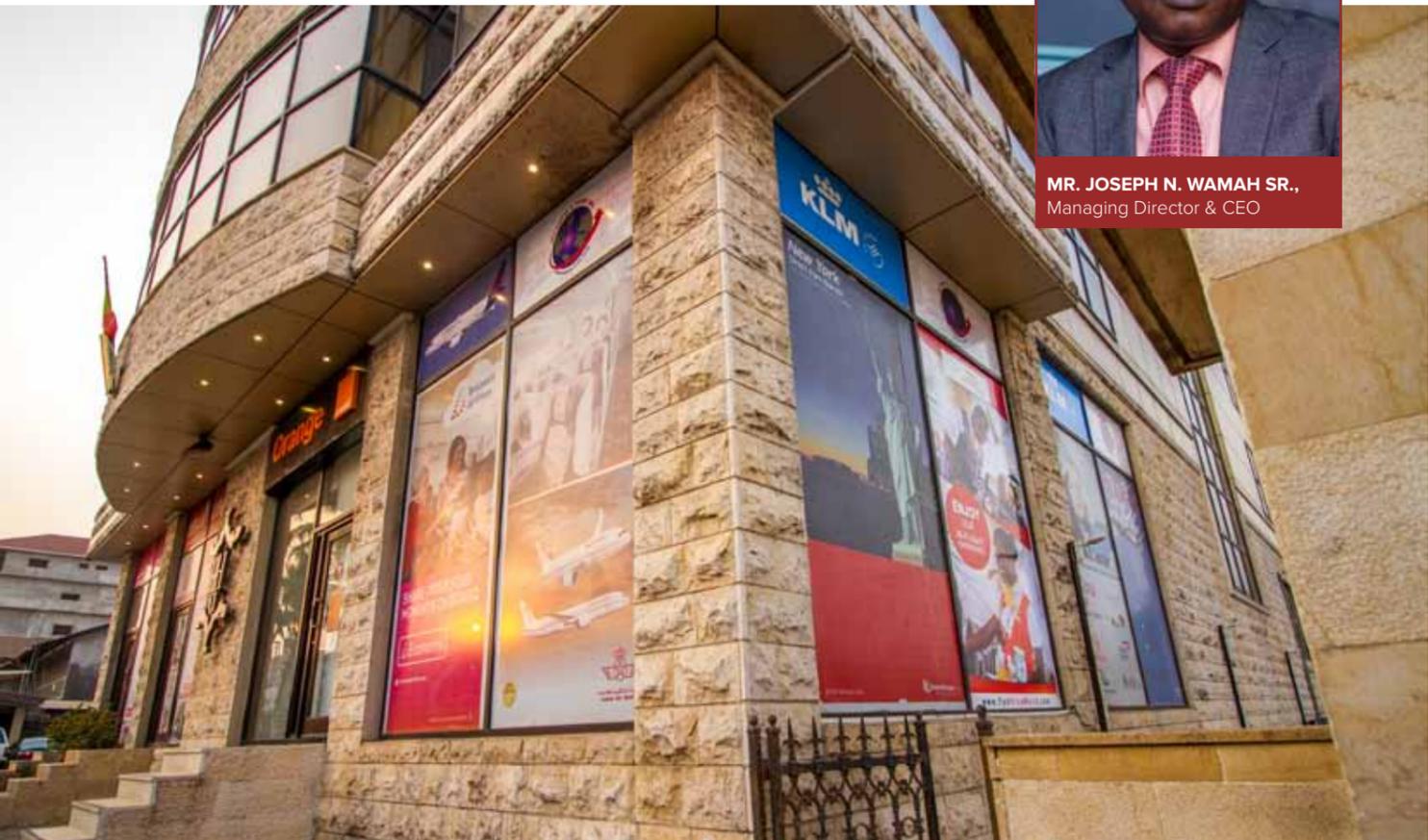


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Profile

ON JOS TRAVEL & TOURS INC.



MR. JOSEPH N. WAMAH SR.,
Managing Director & CEO

Jos Travel & Tours Incorporated (Inc.) wishes you a very warm welcome aboard this exhibition. We hope to make your Liberian experience a memorable one and if you're not already with us, we hope to see you soon! Jos is the leading travel agency in Liberia and has been at the forefront of constantly introducing new ideas and innovations, making it one of the most recognized and respected travel houses in the region. Our founding principle of warm and welcoming service continues to attract and retain customers.

Jos began operations in Liberia December of 2011 and provides numerous travel services, including but not limited to ticketing, tour packages, and transport services to people in Liberia, specifically in Monrovia and its surrounding cities. In order to become viable and quality service provider, she has established affiliations with some of West Africa's top travel agencies in the sub-region. With this collaboration, Jos is highly regarded among all other travel agencies in operating in Liberia. With capabilities of issuing all of the frequently flown airlines in the world, she is unique. Jos is the most functional agent in Liberia and serves as consolidator for many Travel Agencies in Liberia.

Headed by Managing Director & CEO Mr. Joseph N. Wamah Sr., the majority shareholder in Jos which is 100% Liberian owned. Mr. Wamah Sr. with his vast aviation edification and experiences has placed JOS as the number one travel agent in Liberia. Jos now serves as a local and regional travel consolidator and Mr. Wamah has to his credit

over 34 (thirty-four) years of working experience in the aviation industry.

At Jos, we strongly believe that the potentially vibrant tourism industry of Liberia has the prospect of being a productive, impactful and lucrative one. The tourism industry remains the fastest growing and the largest generator of jobs. It brings in the most foreign exchange only second to petroleum. It serves as the principal export for many developing countries in Africa. It gives rise to rapid infrastructure and superstructure developments alike.

At Jos, we always adhere to the truth and deliver on our promise of providing great services at the lowest rates. We will remain as a customer and market-driven Travel Agency, providing value-added services in Liberia. The Travel industry is one that is rapidly changing with more players and competitors than ever before. We pride ourselves on an exceptional reputation that results from dedication and hard work of our employees and incomparable services.

Services

JOS TRAVEL & TOURS INC.



AIR TICKETS

Jos Travel issues airlines tickets in Liberia with flight origin and destination anywhere on the globe. Enabled to ticket for all Airlines operating in Liberia. Moreover, with our HR Selling Platform, we ticket for more than 250 carriers operating worldwide. Jos pre-finances genuine corporate clients travel and deliver the air tickets before payment. We are prepared to meet and assist passengers should the need be, for a minimum fee. We are also in readiness to handle your needs on the last minute basis and even at odd times.



VEHICLE RENTALS / LOGISTICS

Allow Jos to provide you with the right vehicles, at the right price, at the right time, giving you the best service in the industry. We provide access to the widest range of cost-effective vehicles. Our fleet of cars ranges through buses, SUVs, and sedan which are driven by some of the most experienced chauffeurs in the country allowing easy access to your desired destinations. Our reliability can help take the stress out of your vehicle acquisitions.



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Your hotel bookings and room reservations will be handled by Jos before you arrive and leave you ample to focus on the things that matter most. Simply contact us in advance and the arrangements will be made on your behalf. Booking and reserving a room has never been easier.

TOURS

Jos arranges tours & excursions packages worldwide. We facilitate



Meet & Assist globally. Our trained and well-experienced tour guides give you the experience and the feeling of home away from home. We guarantee a relishing experience with maximum satisfaction.



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Feature

THE LIBERIA THAT EXISTS

When you surf the internet, listen to radio and hear many Liberians talk, one would envision that Liberia is another version of hell on the West Coast of Africa. In reality, there is a Liberia that actually exists beyond the view of the doomsday naysayers.

Across the 350 miles of land, Liberia possesses a scenic green forest, uniquely diversified culture, diverse wildlife with endemic species; exquisite beaches, beautiful lakes, a rich history and hospitable people are treasures that make the West African nation everything to write home about.

On the Atlantic coast of Africa's oldest republic lies the country's capital city Monrovia which is home the historic Providence Island- the landing site for freed slaves in the 1800s, the National Museum that exhibits not just memorabilia or artifacts but offers visitors a night stay; the more than 300 years old ruined defense wall in Lofa, the North; the laid-back Robertsport that is known for its surfing treasure located in the Western region; palm-lined beaches along the costal line; the serene Lake Piso in Grand Cape Mount that abodes immeasurable inimitable artisanal fishing for commercial purposes; Kpatawee Waterfall, in Central Liberia which is tagged as the biodiversity hotspot that exists in any forest; the Nimba Mountain Range - is the largest portion of the Upper Guinea rainforest, which is home to the world's largest butterfly (African Giant Swallowtail) and the nearly extinct (Nimba Otter Shrew, a toad found only in Liberia) with a beautiful blue lake in the midst of the mountain and a misty dew that covers the entire range at certain hours in the day and pigmy hippopotamus, Liberia's national symbol hosted in the Sapo National Park – the country's largest reserve of wildlife. This is the Liberia almost never spoken off but exists.

With the economic diversification mantra being touted by the Government of Liberia, these natural heritages, if utilized, would be the surest tailwind to inclusive economic growth and an antidote to poverty.

The Government of Liberia developed the National Export Strategy on Tourism (2016-2020) as part of its ongoing efforts to diversify the Liberian economy and harness the significant tourism based resources of the country but the document is catching dust at the National Legislature disappointingly.

Again, the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) led government, according to Deputy Culture Affairs and Tourism Minister, Lace Gbagonyon, has put together another "Strategic Tourism Development Plan" that sets a target of 15 million international visitors over the next five years- 2018-2023 with a projected direct economic impact of US\$20 to US\$40 million.



1



2



4



5



3



6

1. Providence Island is a former trade post and the first arrival point of freed American Slaves situated on a 11.22 acres of land and surrounded by the Mesurado River and Stockton Creek in Monrovia. It is the home of a 250 years old cotton tree.
2. Nimba Mountain Range is the highest peak is Mount Richard-Molard on the border of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, at 1,752 m (5,750 ft) enclosed by a lowland rainforest. It is the source of Cavalla and Cestos (Nipoué) rice.
3. Sunset beach is a picturesque beach in Southeastern Liberia in Grand Bassa county that is adorned with tropical coconut trees.
4. Evening view of Mangroves on the outskirts of Matadi Estate in Sinkor, Monrovia,
5. Sunsetting on Old Kru, Town Harper City, Maryland County
6. Cannon gun dubbed "Matilda Newport Cannon" during the war freed slaves and native Liberians in the 1800s atop of the abandoned Ducor Hotel in Monrovia

Deputy Minister Gbagonyon said the goal of the plan is to make the tourism sector one of major pillars for economic growth and job creation.

To its advantage, Liberia has niche products that need to be developed to attract the relevant attention: surfing tourism, ecotourism, wildlife tourism and cultural tourism.

"Liberians are lively, friendly people and they love to share their incredible culture and delicious and spicy food with their friends and family alike. You will know for sure you have been properly greeted in Liberia when the outstretched hand of a Liberian welcomes you home with the Liberian handshake followed by a finger snap," Cynthia L. Blandford, Honorary Consul of Liberia in the State of Georgia, the United States.

Liberia is blessed with beautiful resorts, surfable white sand beaches, historical/cultural sites, uninhabited islands, wildlife sanctuaries, eco-tourism parks, waterfalls, bustling markets, to name but a few.

LIBERIA'S TOURISM MINISTER

Expounds Tourism Potential Sustainable Economic Growth

The Liberian economy will continue to snuggle in its wretched state unless it is diversified to engender sustainable growth. The Deputy Minister for Culture and Tourism at the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, Lance T. Gbagonyon believes that tourism is that multi-headed conduit which lasting solution to the country's economic nightmare. He explains in exclusive interview with Exhibit Magazine why he thinks so:

Q How is the tourism sector faring presently?

A I think the sector is experiencing improvements now as compared to what existed in the last two to three years. Currently, we are seeing some improvements and interests from the government and the private sector. So, I will say there are prospects despite the challenges. There are serious progress and rejuvenation.

Q You talked about a tourism development plan recently. What does that plan contain?

A Firstly, we have the National Tourism Export Strategy that existed during the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf led administration. The strategy has been used as a guide in reforming the industry. The document spells out few things: private-sector participation; a national tourism policy as well as business opportunity for the private sector. For the National Policy, we are seeking funding to design it. But in the meantime or in the interim, the Ministry [Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism] developed what we call "the National Tourism Plan" that would guide us in terms of writing proposals and seeking funding. And you know I am the Deputy for Culture and Tourism. Tourism sells culture. So, the plan cuts across both culture and tourism. For instance, we have the development of major tourist attractions across the country. We did a study that identified 67 natural tourism attractions in the country like the Kpatawee, Gbemi Waterfall in Nimba, the Lake Piso, the Stone Village in Grand Gedeh, the Sapo National Park and others. The issue is about infrastructure. Our intent is to upgrade to a minimal standard in order for local businesses and communities to manage them. Therefore, we are targeting 7 of these attractions as a start: the Chimpanzee Island, Culture Village in Marshall, Margibi County, Providence Island, Lake Piso and other accessible areas. Investment in these areas would reap returns since they are within the reach of tourists. Our focus is to get the private sector involved because the government cannot do all. For the Providence Island, we could give a spot out to a private business to investment and pay a specified amount to the government on a monthly or yearly basis. The intent is to create jobs for the communities within which these tourist assets are. If a private company decides to invest in Kpatawee, Gbemi or Chimpanzee Village, they would be able to hire local residents and undertake some corporate social responsibility initiatives and the local government will be actively involved. So, we have designed this plan to launch it to the public to that investors can see the opportunities that exist in the tourism sector.

We also have the VISA upon arrival scheme for selected countries under this plan as well as the President stated in his annual message on January 28, 2019. This holds a huge potential to attract tourists to Liberia. We are thinking on embarking on an economic assessment project in order to inform such scheme in terms of its economic benefit. We will submit that assessment report to the National Legislature for their approval. Right now, embassies across the world that issue Liberian VISAs do not remit those monies to the government's coffers. Some of



them would use it for operational expenses. So, if we have VISA upon arrival, for example, at the Roberts International Airport where we have the Liberia Immigration Service, the Liberia Revenue Authority's Custom Office, the proceeds will go directly into government's account.

Another area is capacity building. There are people who provide services in the industry and we need to build their skills through capacity building programs including that are involved into hotels or general hospitality and other services in the tourism sector because they are the face of the sector.

There are also students who do travel and tour at various institutions in Liberia. We need to find opportunities for them to find something to do in order to get on the job experience.

Another issue captured in this plan is the entertainment and art and craft industries. The products of our artists are everywhere in the streets. There is no recognized destination for them to sell them. We had a meeting with them to host an Art and Craft extravaganza where they will identify projects to undertake. For example, they can choose to design the seal of the United States with wood or design the American flag by using country cloths. And people can come to buy them and the proceeds can go towards specific projects that would be identified by the artists themselves. We also want to have a National Arts and Craft Center, upgrade the museum to international standard. For these, we are seriously considering public-private partnership in which a private firm can manage it and pay some fees to government. Besides that, check around now, music is another major force in terms of job creation. Firstly, we have had a successful election for the Liberian Movie Union. They now have their leaders. What we are going to do now is to train them into leadership, branding, and marketing and also how to copyright their products and make the type of song they sing more appealing. We will also adopt a policy that about 40-50% of the songs played on radio should be Liberian songs. That is what we call "wear, eat and listen Liberia". There will be a month festival where you can eat Liberian food, wear made in Liberia clothes, listen to Liberian music and drink Liberian made beverages as a way of promoting local

entrepreneurs. We are planning a national culture festival which will be hosted on May 14, 2019. The intent for hosting it on Unification Day is to bring people together. We were thinking about hosting it in December when some of our brothers and sisters would be coming home from the Diaspora for visit but we want to test it in May to see how successful it will be. It will be our version of the county meet because all the fifteen (15) counties will be represented: their foods, clothes, dance and arts and craft. That will be done. Another thing is National Culture Center. Since we got the 52 acres of land in Marshall, lower Margibi County. The previous government provided some money to do the fencing and to put about three huts there. We are working to see the fifteen (15) counties represented. It will be a home of our culture. So, we will be seeking funding for that. The issue of having a place for artists to perform is a problem in Liberia unlike Ghana and other countries. Every country has some national theater. Interestingly, President George Manneh Weah has interest in constructing a theater in the country. Just from his speech when he visited Baili Island to build a conference center that will host about six thousand (6,000) people, he is thinking about an event hall that would be our national theater that will at least take four to five thousand people and have office spaces and other facilities. That cannot be one hundred percent funded by government. What we thinking is a private-public partnership. We have an investor who will agree to build it and run it for certain length of time and then turn it over to the government. The next thing is we have some of our historical hotels: the Hotel Victoria in Robertsport, the Ducor Hotel, Hotel Africa and the OAU Village in Nimba. These are historical places that played major role in the history of our country. We need people who would come and say "can we take over the Ducor Hotel or Hotel Africa"? Also, we want to have a zoological park like the one previously owned by the Swedish Government in Lakpazee Community, Airfield. We need some partnership that people can come and invest by having zoos that will help to preserve our wildlife. There are a lot of things in that plan. Hopefully, one the Minister [Eugene Nagbe] approves it; we will share with the public in order for everyone to see highlights of the things in it. We are also talking about building shopping mall

The void that existed before the plan was that there was no systematic roadmap to guide development efforts in the tourism sector in the event an investor expresses interest. For instance, if an investor wants to invest in supermarket in addition to the ones we already have, we can encourage the investor to look into the shopping mall area since we do not have one here.

Our plan is to make tourism an autonomous agency. But while we are still under the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, we need to make tremendous impact so that the people can see the reason why it is important for us to become autonomous. The plan is that by 2020, tourism should be autonomous.

Q Where does tourism fall under the pro-poor agenda for development?

A Tourism falls under the economy and job creation as well as infrastructure under the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). It also falls under "Power To the People". Tourism stands out as a crosscutting issue: it has to do with infrastructure and job creation. Considering the potential we have in this country, with the right investment, I can tell uprightly that tourism can create about forty thousand (40,000) jobs annually. Our plan is to create five thousand jobs in one year in the tourism sector- sustainable jobs. For instance, if you develop at least seven (7) attractions and each attraction can create about seven jobs with the exception of other service providers who would be getting employed during the operation of these places: like taxi drivers, recharge card sellers, hotels will need people to work and other service providers even the mechanics will make money. So, tourism cuts across so it falls under economy and jobs and also under Power to the People because it will empower the locals to empower themselves.

It also falls under infrastructure because the hotels, the theaters, the culture center, the art and craft hall and the mall for example. It also falls under road construction. So, the President's development agenda in road is necessary because if you were leave from here to Kpatawee, the road from the main route is narrow. It is bad off. There is a plan to make it better.

Q The tourism industry is dominated by foreigners. Why are Liberians not doing well in the industry?

A Interestingly, I don't think Liberians are not participating. There are various aspects of the tourism sector that Liberians are competing like hotels, entertainment centers, nightclubs. Liberians own serious hotels that are competing with the ones owned by foreigners. It is true that most of our major hotels are owned by foreigners but what about our guest houses? They are also owned by Liberians. We have hotels owned by Liberians. We have restaurants owned by Liberians and bars owned by Liberians. And those attractions, we will ensure that they are managed by the locals. I believe that much needs to be done in terms of branding and marketing. For instance, we are proposing to have a tourism boot at the Roberts International Airport where Liberian arts and craft can be sold. That spot will exclusively owned by Liberians. That is where the Liberian Tourism Organization will come in. Madam Mai Urey, the head of the organization is doing extremely well by constructively engaging the government on behalf of the private sector.

Q It is a known secret that not much is heard about tourism in Liberia despite the huge potentials that exist. What are the challenges holding progress in the sector?

A Funding is a challenge. Also, knowledge deficit in the industry is an issue. We need to brand the industry as well as market the sector. Access to critical tourists' attractions is also a challenge. That is why the President's road development efforts come handy. Another issue is manpower development- building the human resource capacity of those that are in the sector. Security is also key. When people want to go to the Kpatawee and other tourists' destinations and they do that freely without fear, it would encourage more people to come to the country. But when people hear about protests all over the place, it would scare them. Traffic congestion is another serious issue. Consider going to the Blue Lake in Grand Cape Mount for example, the distance should be about one hour to one hour thirty minutes drive but the traffic in Duala would make them to stay longer. That should not be happening. It serves as barrier to tourists who want to go to those places and have to use these routes. When we talk about capacity, we mean for service provider. The Ministry has the capacity to regulate the sector but the capacity of service providers needs to be developed. Customer service in Liberia is an issue. When a tourist arrives in the country, how does he or she moves from the airport to his or her final destination? The taxi driver is the face of the country at that point. How that driver treats the passenger would have lasting memory on them about our country. So, people need to be trained on how to talk to people. There is not a huge deficit but there is a need for training from time to time.

Q How the government's relationship with key stakeholders in the sector particularly the Liberia National Tourism Association?

A I think we have a good relationship. Most of the plans we have are shared with them and they share theirs with us. They are passionate about developing the human capacity of operators within the sector. There is a renewed commitment from the government to develop the tourism industry and LINTA is an important partner in that regard.

Q What makes these plans different from previous ones that did not see the light of day?

A There is a serious commitment now from the Government of Liberia under the leadership of President George Manneh Weah and the increased involvement of private sector actors are what make the difference. We are determined to improve the sector. Right now, we have written our partners for funding to support the Liberia Culture and Tourism Program that would empower people with skills to have means to sell their products and at the same time train others.

Q What is missing link you have found in the Liberian tourism industry?

A The issue of coordination among actors in the sector is the missing link. At least, we are grateful now that we have national tourism steering committee comprising of the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, the Forestry Development Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, the Ministry of Commerce, Liberia Immigration Service and the Liberia Maritime Authority. We need to have a national coordinating team that will supervise the national export strategy. The Minister started it with a small team of seven persons with the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism as Chair, Co-chaired by the Ministry of Commerce, the Liberia National Tourism Association and Forestry Development Authority.

Q If you were to name one major project to be undertaken in the tourism industry, what would that be?

A Besides the legal framework like the national policy, the tourism policy, the visa upon arrival policy, my major focus will be to develop some of those major attractions- those seven selected attractions like the Blue Lake, Providence Island, Kpatawee because they create employment. So, if they are developed, they would create employment for our sisters and brothers in the sector.

Q Do you care to mention anything we did not ask about?

A I feel that tourism can create more sustainable jobs than agriculture. For instance, you can make farm today and be unable tomorrow. But if you develop Kpatawee Waterfall for example, in the next 10 to 15 years, it will still be the same. The soil can lose relevance but tourists' attraction will lifetime assets. I will encourage more people to invest in the country's tourism sector and Liberia is open for business in all sector including the tourism area. ●

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Exclusive
WITH **LINTA**

Liberia Exhibit sat down with board members of Liberia National Tourism Authority (LINTA) to address a wide range of issues that the tourism industry is confronted with in its quest to become a pillar for growth and prosperity in the Liberian economy.

The primary objective of LINTA is to provide a platform for all tourism operators in Liberia, with the focal aim of representing the sector's interest both at home and abroad in a unified and professional manner. It also assists in providing the government with a realistic and professional input to craft policies affecting the sector.

Any country that stands to benefit from this sector must place road connectivity at the top of its agenda to ensure easy access for tourist eager to explore the length and breadth of Liberia and getting a glimpse of the unique landscape. Accessibility has been placed at the top of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) list of priorities. With this development on hand, LINTA has envisaged that priority will be placed on the tourism sector because they have recognized the assets that will be created through employment, revenue and foreign exchange generation.

LINTA has been working on various projects within the private sector, as well as engaging the government to boost tourism in the country. They have pleaded with the national legislature to pass the Tourism Act of 2013. The Act will put the sector on the right footing to grow from strength to strength because there is a blueprint to work with. Other things they've pushed for is the reduction in the high cost associated with visiting Liberia, which includes: taxes on air tickets, visitation fees, visa fees and more.

The sector is faced with enormous challenges like any industry but comprehensive policies from the

government of Liberia that will propel this unique industry into an upwards trajectory and create an enabling environment for the rise in investments. Inadequate investment incentives, infrastructures, qualified personnel, access to financing are some of the few areas the industry is lacking behind.

Despite the country is lagging behind its neighbors in the tourism sector, more needs to be done to make Liberia a tourist destination, as we do have to offer magnificent historical, cultural, and geographical settings. Liberia's tradition, culture, eco-tourism, wildlife, world-renowned surf waves, and national parks are some untapped areas that need to be polished. This will indeed provide immense revenue to the country as other countries are significantly benefiting from it.

Four months ago, LINTA and the government through the Ministry of Information Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) forged a bond to develop the industry to meet international standards. LINTA in its document proposed the setting up of a national tourism taskforce that will ensure that its members abide by the laws that are on the book with other oversight responsibilities. Key areas of improvements were identified by both parties. They include the restoration of the Providence Island which is currently completed, Kpatawee Waterfall, Sapu National – home of the endemic pygmy hippopotamus, the establishment of a "visa on arrival system", the construction of a tourism information booth within the terminal of the Roberts and James Spriggs International Airports.

NIMBA

The Unheard Story



About 290 kilometers off Monrovia, North of Liberia, situates Nimba county- a nature paradise that is adorned with scintillating waterfalls, eye-catching mountains, clear rivers, streams and has Liberia's coolest weather. It is also the home of over 610 butterfly species including the world's largest butterfly (African Giant Swallowtail) and the nearly extinct Nimba Otter Shrew, a toad found only in Liberia.

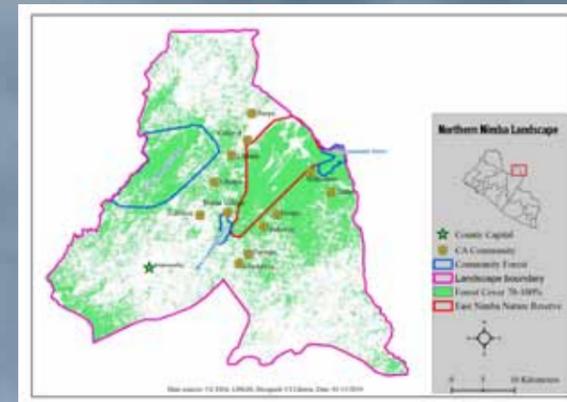
Named after its tallest and largest mountain, Neimba Tohn, Nimba has a unique culture that is deeply rooted in bravery and traditional beliefs such as animism, animal society, secret societies in addition to monotheistic religion.

In mano- one of the native languages of the County- the name means "a mountain on which young unmarried women or girls slip" or "a lipping mountain for young unmarried women or girls".

Due to the mystical practice of animism, hunters in certain areas specifically Gbapa, Zolowee, Zortapa and Bonlah are not allowed to kill certain animals: chimpanzee, leopard, honey badger and African civet. Other hunters

would avoid killing these animals because they represent family totem.

In other cases, there are sacred trees, creeks and rocks that are set aside as untouchable features based on the belief that there are spirits living within them that control the fortunes of some communities and these spirits must be served in order for good fortune and there would be serious consequences if they are not appeased. Some of the sacred places include Guele Gbeih, Gningbinhi, Goue Gbah, Guebehi, Golo-Gleh, Gouanpah, Douopah and Gbeayee located in Gbapa; Dimi, Gouegbahee, Dimibleen and blei in Zolowee; Guegbaheen, Zoweguebleen etc. in Zortapa.



NORTHERN NIMBA LANDSCAPE

The Northern Nimba landscape covers the following:

1. Forest cover 70-100% canopy: 77,304 hectares (Hansen2017)
2. Landscape size: 165,268 hectares
3. 1 National Reserve: East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR)
4. Three community forests
5. ArcelorMittal Liberia concession
6. Conservation activities
7. etc





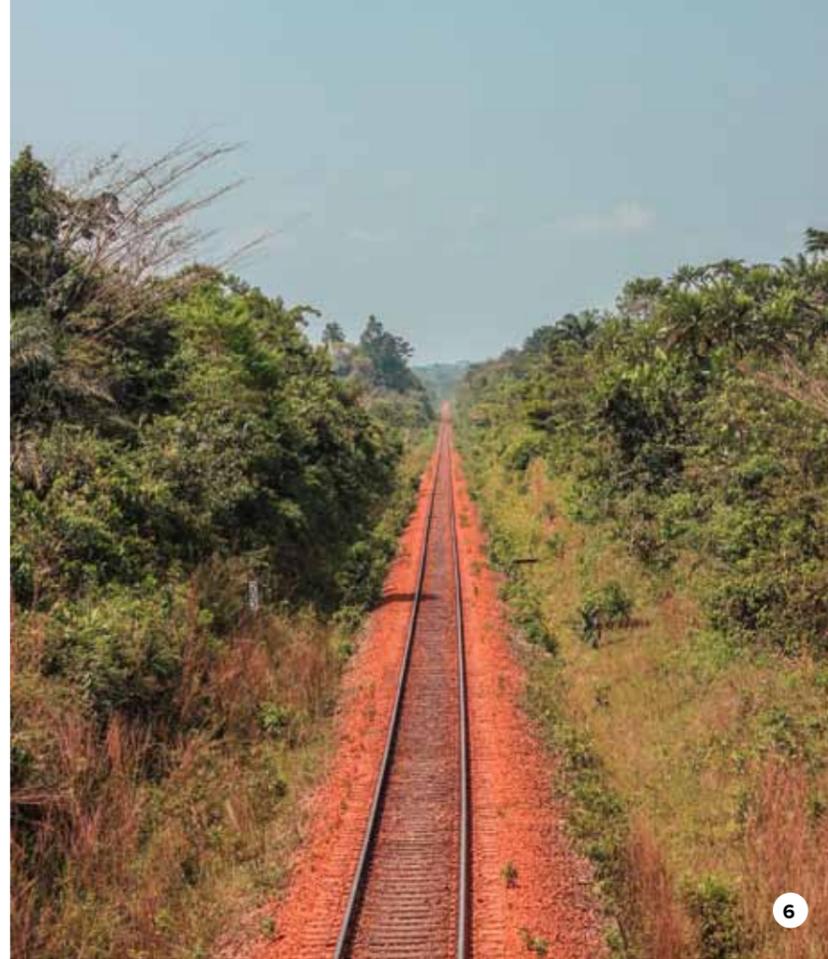
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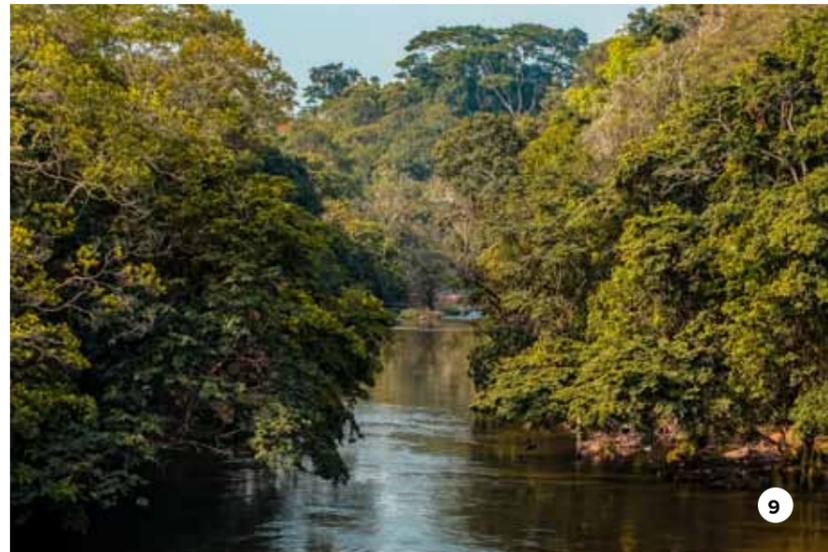
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1. The ever-luscious green forest of the East Nimba Nature reserves is endowed with vegetation
2. A cow taking a sniff in the fields of Sanniquille, Nimba
3. Chimpanzee stares with caution and a hint of admiration at a chimpanzee rescue facility adjacent the Roberts International Airport (ROB)
4. Cow strolling on a dusty track leading to Marshall City, Margibi County
5. Along the streets of Yekepa stands tall trunks of centuries-old trees kissing the skies in perfect alignment
6. With train tracks sprawling every corner of the country, it's an understatement that mining forms an integral part of the Liberian economy; Nimba is the focal point
7. The age-old town of Zolowee is divided by the roadway from Sanniquillie to Yekepa
8. The East Nimba Nature Reserve has many hidden gems including a waterfall that awaits exploration
9. The St. John River that borders Bong and Nimba County is a source of livelihood for inhabitants in nearby communities

These cultural and traditional beliefs are besides the crunchy zoglolo and the sumptuous grasshopper dishes that come along with the spicy GB.

Nimba County is Liberia's largest county, measuring approximately 4,460 square miles. The county is also the second most populous county in Liberia with population of 462,026 (2008 Census Report). Nimba is located in the northeastern part of Liberia. It shares border with the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire in the East and the Republic of Guinea in the Northwest. Its capital city is Sanniquellie.

There are two main ethnic groups in Nimba County, the Dan, also known as Gio and the Mano. The Dan are located closer to the Côte d'Ivoire border and the Mano are located closer to the Guinea border. Currently there are other minority groups from all over Liberia and West Africa residing in Nimba, including the Bassa, Pkelle, Lorma, Mandingo, Krahn, and many others.

Nimba also has two of the largest hospitals in the country, Jackson Doe Hospital in Tappita, Nimba County and the Ganta United Methodist Hospital. One of Liberia's popular tourist destinations, Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve, can also be found in Nimba County; it is located close to Yekepa.

Established in 1964, research shows that there were no "Gio" and "Mano" until the Maan and Daan were corrupted by tax collectors from the Kpelle ethnic group. Also, Ganta was "Garpa" Sanniquellie was "Sein Gbein".

For a sightseeing visit to the North-eastern part of Liberia, exploring the East Nimba Nature Reserve would be a lifelong experience. The reserve covers about 13,569 hectares of land and boasts of having most remarkable diversities in terms of flora and fauna in the whole West Africa. It also hosts dazzling number of single-site endemic species including viviparous toads, household bats as well as the micropotamogale and chimpanzees. ●

**THE ABANDONED ROOTS
OF ORGANIZATION
FOR AFRICAN UNITY**



It all started after series of meetings were held between the three West African leaders namely, the host, president William V.S Tubman of Liberia, Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

After some consultation with the people of Nimba County, Chief Bona Suah decided to pinpoint the spot for the formation of that body in 1957 of August. The three palaver huts which is historical to the formation of the organization of African Unity were named after the 3 presidents. They represent a unique African heritage where problems are solved and town hall meetings are held.

At the signing of the declaration of the O.A.U, the three leaders sat in separate palaver huts. President Tubman then the host, took the middle hut which serves as the link, while president Toure on the left and president Nkrumah on the right.

According to Dr. Joseph Saye Guanue, a notable Liberian historian who spoke to this magazine via a telephone interview said, that the huts current location should have been the headquarters of the OAU now African Union.

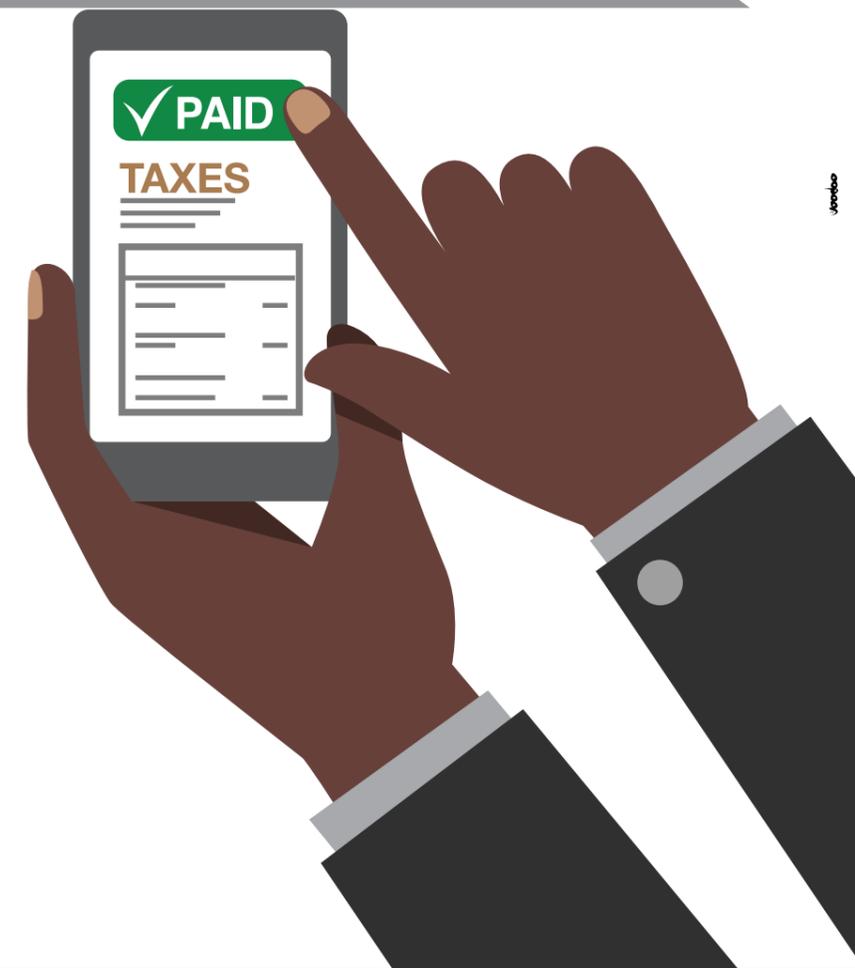
With the emerging of African nations from the colonial era, and the francophone countries objecting to the building of the headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia This was mainly due to the lack of infrastructure and a visionary leader to maintain the upward trajectory of the organization •



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MISS TOURISM LIBERIA

Biography Of Miss Lisa Harris

Lisa Harris is Miss Tourism Liberia 2017, a writer, an entrepreneur, a mentor, a women rights activist.

Miss Lisa Harris was born in the capital Banjul, The Gambia on October 29, 1994. Due to the civil crisis in Liberia, her family migrated all over West Africa seeking refuge and finally settled in the Gambia, where she was born. Her family later moved on to Accra, Ghana where she grew up and started her educational journey. At age 14, Miss Harris and her family moved back to Liberia where she continued her education and later graduated from the Lott Carey Baptist Mission School in Browerville City.

Lisa Harris is a current student at the University of Liberia where she studies Environmental Science

Upon being crowned Miss Tourism Liberia in September 2017, Miss Harris has worked in every way possible to promote and aid in the development of all forms of tourism in Liberia. It is in this capacity she established in April 2018 the Explore Liberia Tourism Initiative (ELTI), a private not for profit organization aimed at working with young people to promote tourism in Liberia. Under ELTI, and along with her team, she runs several projects and activities mostly involving young people; one of which include teaching young people the traditional Liberian dances and other African dances in order to promote the Liberian and African culture through dance.

Also in her capacity as Miss Tourism Liberia, Miss Harris supports and works with the Culture and Tourism Sector at the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) in its tourism programs and activities, along with other local and tourism stakeholders which include the Liberia National Tourism Association (LINTA).

Apart from her works in tourism, Miss Harris also volunteers with the Paramount Young Women Initiative (PAYOWI), a non-governmental not for profit young women's organization that focuses on educating and empowering girls and young women in Liberia. With this organization, Miss Harris has aided in the development and capacity building of young women in Liberia. She has impacted the lives of countless girls and young women



through her services. She serves as a mentor for many young girls and she has learned to uphold and promote women's rights, helping women rediscover themselves and further contribute to national development.

Interestingly, Miss Lisa Harris is a published author and a writer who has written several poems and essays. In 2016, she became the winner of the first "Sexy Like A Book" Poetry Competition for Liberian girls. "Sexy Like A Book" is an initiative of the Martha Juah

Educational Foundation, one that promotes literacy and supports education for girls in Liberia.

In December 2018, Miss Harris brought to life her entrepreneurial desire when she co-founded the Me To You Gift Baskets Company, a business that is concentrating on making gift baskets out of a wide range of high quality ingredients for all occasions. Out of her love for planning and sharing, Miss Harris seeks to make giving gifts a very convenient, affordable and easy gesture for people through the company.

Miss Harris also affiliates with and supports many youth groups in Liberia. She is a very young professional who is committed to effective and efficient performance in all aspects of her life, prioritizing every form of human growth and development. She is dedicated to education, women empowerment, and youth development. Miss Harris is a lover of nature and diversity and she has a strong attachment to tourism and diplomacy.

Lisa Harris has gained many recognitions and awards for her works in and out at Liberia. She has represented Liberia well at the international level.

Miss Harris loves to travel, read, write, and meet new people. She is a lover of God and she references him in all her works. She has strong principles that guide her in life and she always tries to see the good in people and situations. She believes in human and gender equality and she is of the conviction that a person can be and achieve anything and everything they set their mind to. ●



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HISTORICAL HERITAGE IN RUINS

An In-depth Look At *Hotel Africa*



It contained 160 rooms, suites, duplex and 52 villas one coffee shop, one fine dining restaurant, one beach restaurant, one casino, one beautiful lobby bar – the famous Bacardi Disco and a swimming pool shaped in the form of the Map of Africa. This was the Hotel Africa – a luxurious five-star structure that now lies in ruins

The relics of the pool seemed to offer a despondent annotation of a multimillion dollars asset.

In its glory days, the Hotel was constructed in 1979 by the late President William Richard Tolbert to host the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) conference outside Monrovia's suburb of Virginia in order to leave the noisy Capital City.

At Hotel Africa, one would only find the one-time West Africa's premier luxury hotels reduced to a condition unsafe even for nomadic, its rubble-strewn floors overtaken by small forest and wastes from community dwellers.

"Hotel Africa is finished...the guys have successfully looted this building," Martin Harris, a resident of the Hotel Africa community said.

Built at a cost of about US\$25 million, Hotel Africa was highly hit by the 14-year Liberian civil conflict but its facilities got severely destroyed during and after the third wars led by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

(LURD) to unseat former President Charles Taylor.

During the heat of the first civil war that led to the death of President Samuel Kanyon Doe, the Hotel hosted warring factions, including Charles Taylor's dreaded National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) representatives headed by the late General Isaac Mussah to the Transitional government.

Residents of Virginia where the hotel is situated indicated that Hotel Africa was still in an acceptable condition following the election of Charles Taylor in 1997.

The residents said the hotel's facilities destruction worsened when the government of Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf could not control the alarming sea erosion that swept away bulk of the villas along with the main swimming pool. Criminals also took over the main hotel, using it as their hideout in the presence of the United Nations peacekeepers and completely looting the premises. The UNMIL peacekeepers were

based around the main entrance of the hotel compound.

The Hotel Africa project also provided jobs for some 125 persons, including residents of the area before it collapsed.

According to 67-year old James Stutterfield, the hotel was lastly managed by Dutch business tycoon, Gus Kogvehogen before LURD rebels forced Taylor to resign. Both Gus and Taylor fled into exile but were arrested to face prosecution in the same country, The Netherlands.

The beautiful facility also had its own bitter taste of Liberia's civil unrest.

On August 5, 1990, Mr. Stutterfield said soldiers of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) kidnapped five employees from the Hotel: the British Manager Michael Doe, two Lebanese nationals and two Liberians. The armed men later murdered Mr. Doe, throwing him off the 4th floor balcony on the same day.

The day before, 48 other foreign nationals were arrested by the INPFL. The Hotel was a refuge point for expatriates who were in search of secure place because the management at the time would promise security and discounted services for the rooms but the fun was short-lived when Prince Johnson's men arrive. ●



CHIMPANZEE VILLAGE

Cries For

ATTENTION

In Marshall Territory, lower Margibi County, there are over sixty domesticated chimps grunting and drumming on hollow trees for attention from nearby towns' residents or a philanthropist from afar since they were left abandoned following a virus test conducted in the 1970s by New York Blood Center. They were used by scientists who were searching for vaccines to treat hepatitis B and river blindness.

These chimps are practically pin-up due to the fact that they've managed to survive disease, two civil wars and numerous medical tests and experiments for over 40 years.

In 2014, the species were left to starve at the height of the Ebola Disease Outbreak after their caretakers fled for safety.

Although the NYBC promised to provide US\$8 million in 2017, the apes are still surviving at the mercy of locals.

Resultantly, the chimpanzees have resorted to self defense by adopting unfriendly posture and sending waves of fear down the spine of those living within their proximity.

The "Monkey Island" is ideal for tourists visit but the psychological effect of their abandonment makes it almost impossible for anyone to dare go closer to the area. They would use stones to safeguard their heritage against "intrusion".

These creatures are going through hell- a feat that has drawn the attention of many from the Africa.

At the moment, gathering enough food for the apes daily feedings is a military-scale operation. Fruit and vegetables are sourced from farmers and markets across the county; other food is delivered to the compound, or collected from riverside villages during the daily, five-hour round trip to the islands.

They were infected with diseases like hepatitis and 'river blindness' to help scientists develop vaccines to be used on sick humans.

A sanctuary is not just a repository for warm fuzzies, real and metaphorical. It is crucial for wildlife conservation in Liberia and to some extent adventurous tourism.

Liberian law states it's illegal to kill, own or trade a chimpanzee but without a place to bring confiscated chimps, it's difficult for

authorities to act.

Acting as a deterrent, the sanctuary will provide indirect protection for the 7000 chimps, hunted for bush meat and trafficked as pets, outside its boundaries.

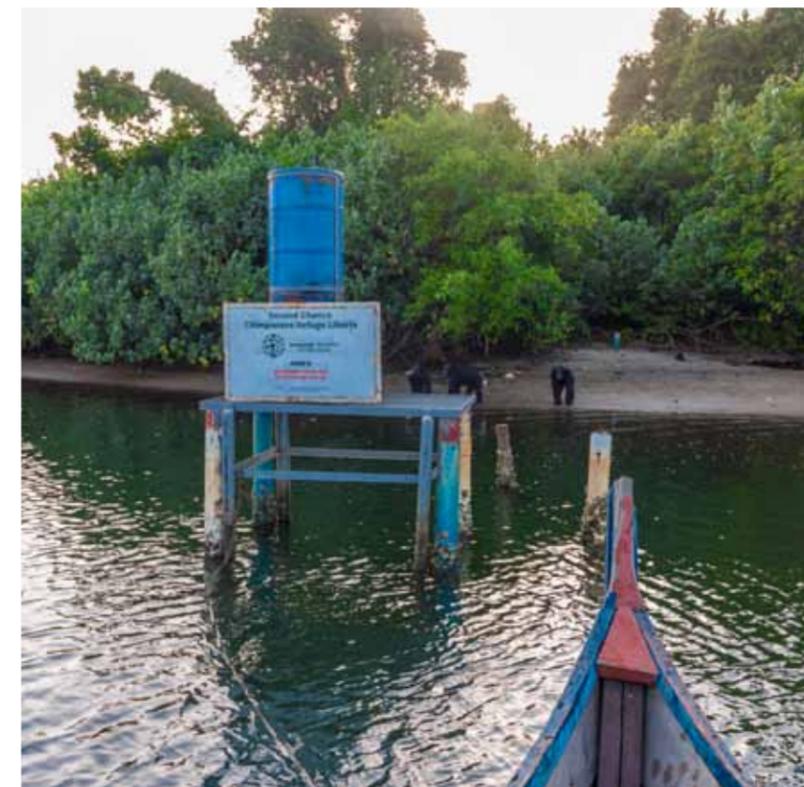
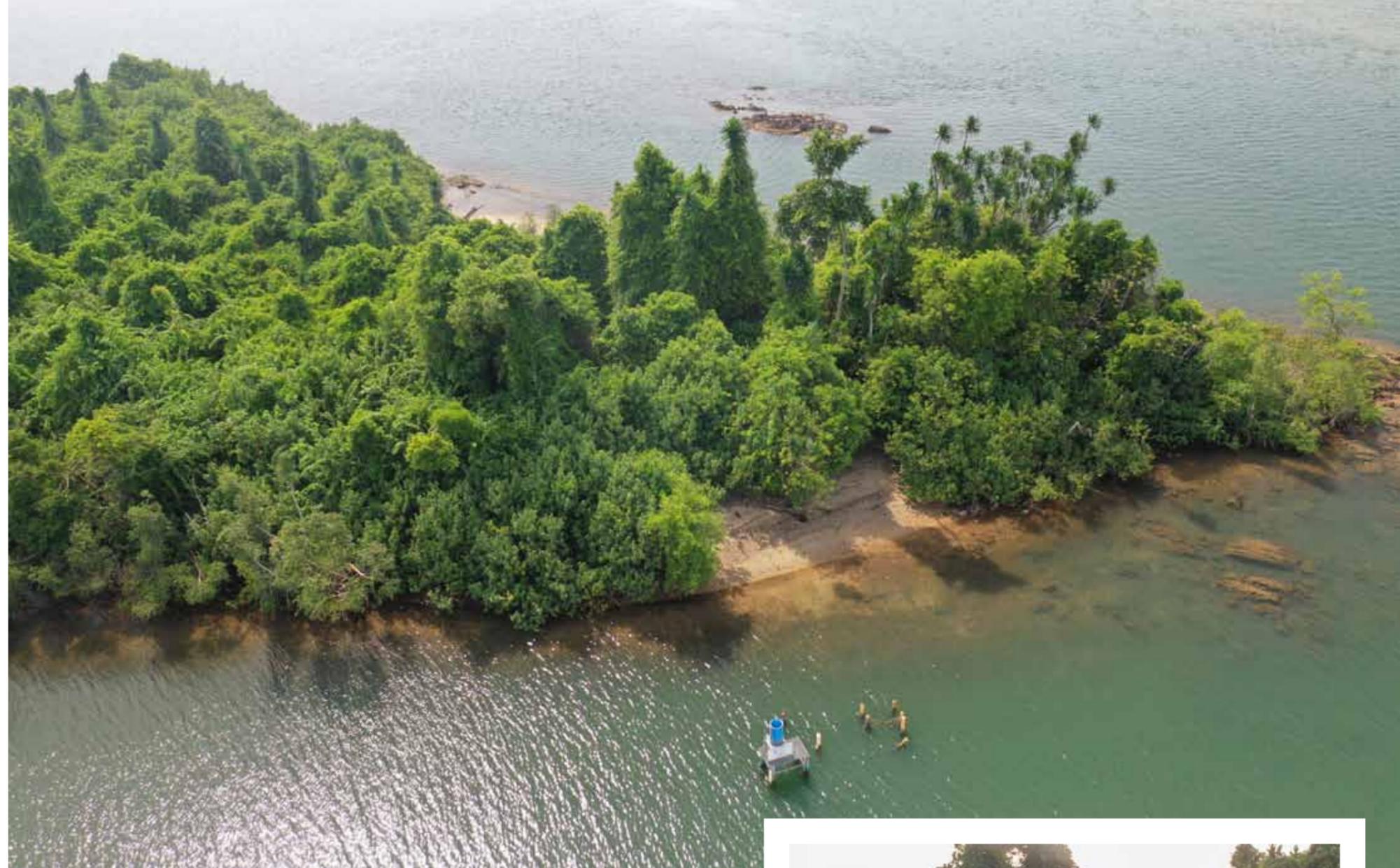
Jenny Desmond, a CNN correspondent and her husband Jim are making strides under the Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue and Protection since they moved to the West African nation in 2015.

Upon the couple arrival in Liberia, the country's forestry authorities brought them 19 young chimpanzees in need of parents and a home.

Unlike the blood center chimps, who were fully grown and living somewhat independently, the majority of these chimps were newly orphaned by poachers who killed their mothers for bushmeat. Like human babies, these chimpanzees need around-the-clock care.

According to a statement from the organization, in order to provide adequate care for the orphans, the Desmonds hired a team of caregivers from the local village to serve as their surrogate mothers. But chimpanzee babies grow up quickly, and, by two or three years old, they have to be transitioned into a group of other chimps. In addition, they need far more space — space that they don't have in the small home they inhabit in a densely populated village two hours outside of Monrovia.

Leaving this natural heritage to the goodwill of an NGO leaves much to desire. ●



BEYOND THE POMP AND PAGEANTRY OF CULTURE

Liberia's culture uniquely epitomizes the maxim "unity in diversity" in the country's diverse ethnicity with distinct roots, the Southern US heritage of the freed Americo-Liberian slaves and the ancient African descendants of the indigenous people and migratory tribes. The West African nation's cultural heritages are left to fend for themselves notwithstanding the splendor they possess.

Known as the home of classical African masks, the artistic prowess of Liberian wood carvers is incomparable. Cultural practices however differ from tribe to tribe. According to a policy paper published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the idea of religion, just as with everything else, varies from tribe to tribe and characterized by a predisposition towards secrecy encapsulated in the concept of ifa mo - "do not speak it"

and an ingrained belief in the intervention of mysterious forces in human affairs. These religious ideas are laden with vast opportunities for research-theological, psychological, sociological and so on. Suffice it to say that the tribes of Liberia, in spite of their individual idiosyncracies, have been able to live together as one people in an atmosphere of cultural accommodation and tolerance. Dance is a valued heritage, with the Liberian National Culture Group giving

performances both in the country and overseas based on traditional themes. The gradual integration of all Liberia's ethnic groups has given rise to a renewed interest in its tribal culture as a reminder of the diverse roots of the new country.

The uniqueness of Liberia's culture has its roots in the strength of the country's tourism potential in area of detailed decorative and ornate masks, large and infinitesimal wood carvings of realistic human faces, well-known personalities, pictures of daily life and frills particularly combs, spoons and other artistic sculptures.

Mournfully, unlike other countries across the world, culture is not taught in Liberian schools despite the common knowledge that culture cannot be inherited biologically

but learned from older generation. Consequently, the younger generation of Liberians is gravitating towards western way of life. The deliberate neglect of Liberia's cultural heritage, especially over the past 12 years, has put it in a serious extinction crisis, according to former Assistant Culture Minister Louise McMillian-Siaway. Madam said there is an urgent need for investment in cultural and traditional values by the government of President George Manneh Weah in order to preserve them for generations.

The former culture minister explained that during her tenure at the ministry, she observed that traditional languages, spoken or written, are fast dying off as most people seem not to care to speak their dialects (mostly youth), with parents or old folks not caring about teaching them to the youth.

"It's sad and deeply troubling to know that the Vai script or syllabus written by Momolu Bukele has gone completed missing in action. The Vai language, particular of our country, is one of the several sub-Saharan African languages to develop its own writing system. The worst part is that the civilization that comes with that language is dead.

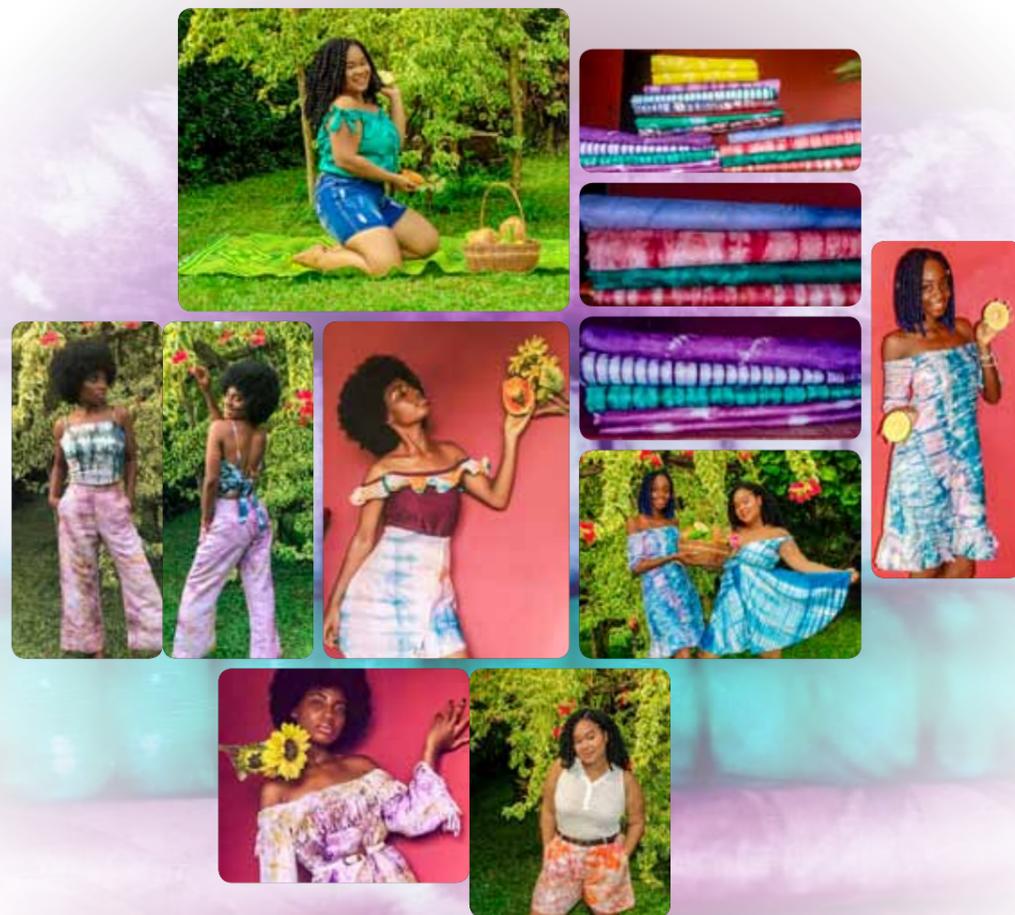
"Additionally, historical, ancient places lay in relative disrepair across the

country, suffering from a lack of neglect. This shows we don't always respect our heritage; we don't always value it the way we should. And past governments have made it worst.

"Language, literature, and historical places are the hallmarks of our human existence, civilizations and cultures, which play a crucial role in diversity," she said. "But these things are being lost."

She warns "any loss of cultural heritage is a loss of our common memory; and it impairs our ability to apply lessons of the past to the present and the future." •





Nulee Erika Enders

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR
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Seventeen years old Nulee Erika Enders is a student of the Bluecrest University College Liberia majoring in Business Marketing. Miss Enders love for arts and fashion alongside her belief in diversity have inspired the birth of Kleurvolle (Colorful) a textile and clothing brand that is tie and dye based.

Kleurvolle seeks to inspire everyone to stay true and love themselves no matter their race, religion, or sexual orientation because everyone is beautiful in their own way and made of colors. Miss Enders endeavored to build a brand upon this vision in order to transcend cultural boundaries. Upon her task to accomplish that which is needed, she started her venture with a start-up cost of 500 United States Dollars. The funds were

utilized effectively and efficiently to purchase resources needed to make her first batch of merchandise fabrics.

On July 28th, 2018 Kleurvolle was officially launched and within six months, Kleurvolle had sold fabrics nationwide and reaching as far as the United States. Kleurvolle has adapted to the Liberian business environment by providing delivery service and providing the option of customized and unique designs upon request. Through expansion, Kleurvolle fabrics can be found at the Bloom Retail Store in Smart Liberia Office on 3rd Street Jallah's Town.

With the development of authentic, vintage, and classic dresses, jumpsuits, skirts, T-shirts, tops and head wraps for everyday wear.

With the aspiration of being a globally recognized brand, Kleurvolle aim is to serve as a catalyst for change and allow our society to see the world through Kleurvolle's lens. ●

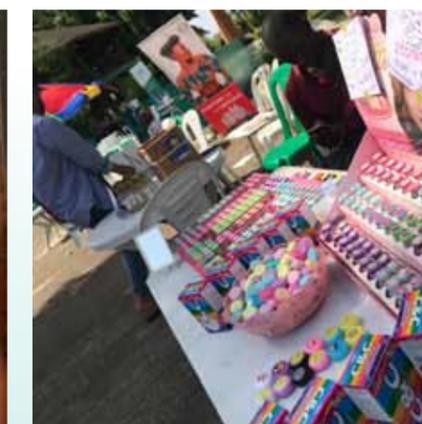
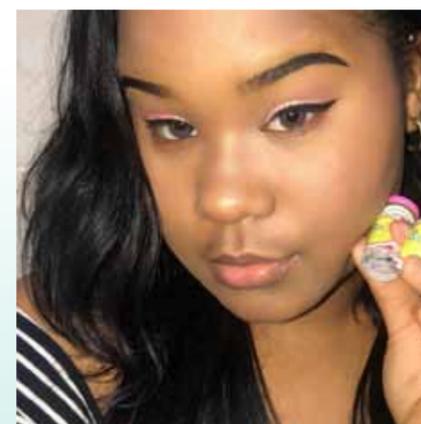


Sheera Vambo

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR
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SnS Beauty Lines

Seventeen-year-old Sheera Vambo is the founder of SnS Beautylines a cosmetic distributor in Liberia. It is Co-owned and managed by younger sister KanteeraVambo. The nomenclature of the business is centered on the distribution of contact lenses, solution formula, lens cases, and other cosmetic items. The inception of this business venture by Sheera was a direct result of the overpricing and limited variety of cosmetic products in Liberia. SnS versatility ensures options that are suitable for darker skin tone.

SnS does make-up for individuals, wedding, graduations and other events. Sheera knowledge for make-up is self-taught and with her deep desire, she is on the path of becoming a cosmetologist. SnS products are sold at their office in Congo Town 540 junction adjacent Stop & Shop supermarket and services offered there also. ●





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Made In Nimba

MISS WOKIE DOLO

A go-getter

She is young woman with a humble beginning who had always aspired to become a beauty queen or at least a star that her generation would look up to for inspiration. Despite unsuccessful resistance from her parents against the her career path, Wokie Dolo maneuver her way to realizing her long awaited dream to become Miss Liberia.

Her parents are devoted Catholics and their religious belief would not allow them to see their daughter become a beauty queen or a star. Wokie's desire to reach her goal outweighed that drawback.

A native of Sanniquillie, Nimba County, Miss Dolo's lively lifestyle drove her passion more fonder so much that she navigated peers' immovable trait to meet former Miss Liberia Patrice Juah in Ganta in a rather sudden rendezvous. Ever since that fateful day, Wokie got more inspired to pursue her ambition.

"One morning, my mother sent me to get something for her. While on my way, I met some community friends who told me that Miss Liberia then Patrice was visiting Ganta. They asked if I had seen her. I said "no" and asked for her location. My friends showed me Miss Juah's location and I took the bold step to meet her. I introduced myself and requested her contact number. Miss Juah marveled at my boldness. Since then, I cherished that number even though I did not have a phone because I wanted to be like her in terms of wearing that crown someday," Miss Dolo said in an exclusive interview with Exhibit Magazine in Monrovia on February 9, 2019.

A few months later, young Wokie was talked into contesting for Miss Ganta in 2006. She adhered to the encouragement from community neighbor given her traits that they believe would give her the crown. Wokie did not win the Ganta crown but won in her categories like the best African custom.

Since then, the passion to become a beauty queen went to another level. Consequently, she participated in Miss Cuttington University and won. This time, her parents were not aware of her decision to contest for the university's crown. The news took them by surprise.

The thirst for national accolade was not quenched even with the Cuttington Crown. Wokie auditioned for Miss Liberia

in 2014 but the Ebola Disease outbreak would not allow the pageant to take place. Miss Dolo did not however give up on her dream until 2017 when the national crown finally came while representing her county, Nimba.

Wokie's journey to stardom gives her the impetus that nothing is impossible for anyone to achieve once you put yourself at it with a success mentality.

According to her, the crown has since made her a better person who would explore every positive avenue to make positive impact in society.

Miss Dolo's horizon has broadened since she won the prestigious crown in 2017 by reaching out to her peers in other parts of the world to replicate the positive things they are doing in their country to help her birthplace.

As a result, she sees reaching out to young people through mentorship, training, personal coaching and educational

"Through the Wokie Dolo Foundation, many young people, both boys and girls, are being mentored, coached, trained and provided learning opportunities to study abroad as well as engage in meaningful ventures that would make them better people" WOKIE DOLO



opportunities through her "Wokie Dolo Foundation" after working for different community groups.

Wokie said "through the foundation, many young people, both boys and girls, are being mentored, coached, trained and provided learning opportunities to study abroad as well as engage in meaningful ventures that would make them better people" adding that the foundation is a legacy initiative to cater to victims of gender based violence, help teenage mother and mentor people.

The Wokie Dolo Foundation has taken its works beyond the bailiwick of Liberia to South Africa, Asia in particular the Philippine, East Africa, etc.

She started training her peers to participate in pageantry through the "Youth for Success" organization- a group that did not survive due to lack of support.

Today, Wokie is grooming young people who are interested in being models under the "La Queen Entertainment". Representation has been made from this organization to the Miss Earth Beauty Pageant. It is aimed at discovering talents from the across Liberia and other parts of the world.

"It is easy but comes with hardwork. Once you put your mind to it, you can achieve it. Whenever I go outside Africa, all I hear is that Africans are not serious. We want everything on silver platter. And it is true because I have experienced it myself. People should be passionate about what they do. If you want to do it, go for it. Don't allow people to distract you," she admonished. ●

BUCKY RAW

Trapee-artist

From a humble native lineage in Nimba County to his mercurial rise to stardom and onto hitting number one spot on iTone and Amazon Music chart through his mixtape "Country Soda 2" in the international category, Karwordou Cole, famously known by his artist name "Bucky Raw" has taken Liberian entertainment to an all new level unimaginably.

He said "my CS2 was inspired by my jail time and deportation. I had a lot to prove in short time. So, I just went hard at it."

Karwordou, nicknamed hipco lyrical mastermind, would capulate the souring memory of the civil war in Liberia. He is called "raw" because his rhymes are not made superficially attractive but expose deeper truths about the shared experience among Liberians.

His career did not come on the spur of the moment but was inspired by his Uncle Teddy Tyat who used to play guitar for leisure pursuit. "I used to sit with him while he played. I was eager to learn," he said in an interview with Exhibit magazine.

Bucky Raw's musical career was in the shadow until 2016 when he became well-known after showcasing his lyrical genius in a freestyle cypher battle. In that genre, he swops from his usual pure hip-hop to hipco and then to his native dialect, Gio. Bucky paints a picture of his life when he says "child soldiers worshipping the warlords my testimony." He goes on to say, "seeking for refuge and using poison ivy for mattress. I'm reminiscing on maggots feasting on dead corpse, the missing limbs, the battle scars and something we cope with." In addition, he expresses that the brutal nature of war forced him to grow up as a "savage ducking strikes from automatics."

Evidently, Raw's lyrics are not made up of meaningless raps and rhymes but with depth and truth. He incorporates this truth in an edgy and spectacular fashion of hip-hop and hipco mixed together. By doing this, he gives his listeners clear and relatable visuals of the life of a child soldier – a name that later became the name of his record label, "Child Soldier Entertainment" and a survivor.

The Nimba born musical heavyweight told Exhibit Magazine that the name "Child Soldier" came about based on his experience during the war. "The Label represents any kid that been through hard times and made it or lost deceased," Bucky Raw intimated.

The lyrics mastermind had his own share of sour experience when he was deported from the United States. That experience has however made him stronger against mediocre minds riddled with envy.

As a star with an exacting beginning, Bucky Raw sees giving back to the less fortunate exciting. "I come from a hard background. So, doing things for the less fortunate means everything to me," he added.

Even so, Bucky Raw has unhappy impression about the way people would work in the dark to bring artists down. He said some big hands would suppress a good artist because they favor others at the detriment of the entertainment industry in Liberia. ●



"I come from a hard background. So, doing things for the less fortunate means everything to me," -BUCKY RAW

Tasty Liberia



ZOGOLO

The Weird Cuisine

It is weird but crunchy and a delicious chew in Nimba.



Zogolo, Gio name given to grasshopper, is a popular cuisine in Northern Liberia. Liberian children like to catch grasshoppers and then they fry them up and eat. It is a delicacy worth battling for among locals in the county.

Scientists say grasshoppers have 20 grams of protein and just 6 g of fat per 100g.

Grasshoppers are a group of insects belonging to the suborder Caelifera. They are among what is probably the most ancient living group of chewing herbivorous insects, dating back to the early Triassic around 250 million years ago.

Grasshoppers are typically ground-dwelling insects with powerful hind legs which allow them to escape from threats by leaping vigorously.

Entomophagy in Nimba is prevalent among the Gio tribe even though other ethnic groups have gotten attracted to the crunchy insect delicacy. ●

Made In Liberia SNACKS



Beniseed Candy

In Liberia, sesame seed is commonly known as beniseed, which is used to make beniseed candy. This tasty candy is easy to make, making it accessible at every snack shop around town. Only two ingredients are needed to make beniseed candy: sugar and beniseed. What you'll need to do is parch sesame seed until crunchy and melt the sugar until golden brown. Next, insert parched sesame seed into the melted sugar and stir. Once cool, make little balls. ●



Coconut Candy

Like beniseed candy, coconut candy is also easy to make and can be seen at many snacks shops around town. The preparation is similar to beniseed candy, though you'll need to replace parched beniseed with parched coconut flakes. ●



Kanyan

Unlike the three snacks listed above, kanyan is not candy but rather a snack. It can be eaten as lunch because it keeps you full for a long period of time. Kanyan is made of three ingredients: peanut, gari (grated, dried cassava), and sugar. Preparing kanyan is straight forward. Place all three ingredients together in a mortar and grind using a pestle. Lastly, make a square and cut into pieces. ●

As you can see, Liberians aren't just about savory foods. They also make tasty candies and snacks. If you ever find yourself in Liberia, make sure to grab one of these candies or snacks and indulge. ●



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Natural Luxury

EXOTIC SCENERY BEYOND MONROVIA

- ALVINO HOTEL IN GANTA



The Alvino Hotel, luxurious lodging facility in Ganta Nimba County, north of Liberia is atypical of the Liberian adage that Monrovia is not Liberia.

This eye-catching hotel consists of 260 rooms including an exquisite 320sqm Presidential Suite, 15 Junior Suites and 61 Executive Club rooms plus complimentary access to the luxurious Executive Lounge.

With the best meeting and conference space in Nimba County, the hotel embraces a grand ballroom, a pre-function area and five large meeting rooms all equipped with state-of-the-art technologies designed to ensure that all business activities run as smoothly as possible.

At Alvino Hotel, guests are assured of being spoiled for choices with a wide variety of dining and entertainment options available within the hotel.

As a hospitality facility successfully recovering from the shadows of alleged arson attack, the hotel's proprietor and CEO, Mr. Prince Howard says the facility is as good as any hotel in West Africa, not just Monrovia.

According to Mr. Howard, the hotel is fenced, at a height of about 10 feet, and has indoor parking and CCTV installed for security.

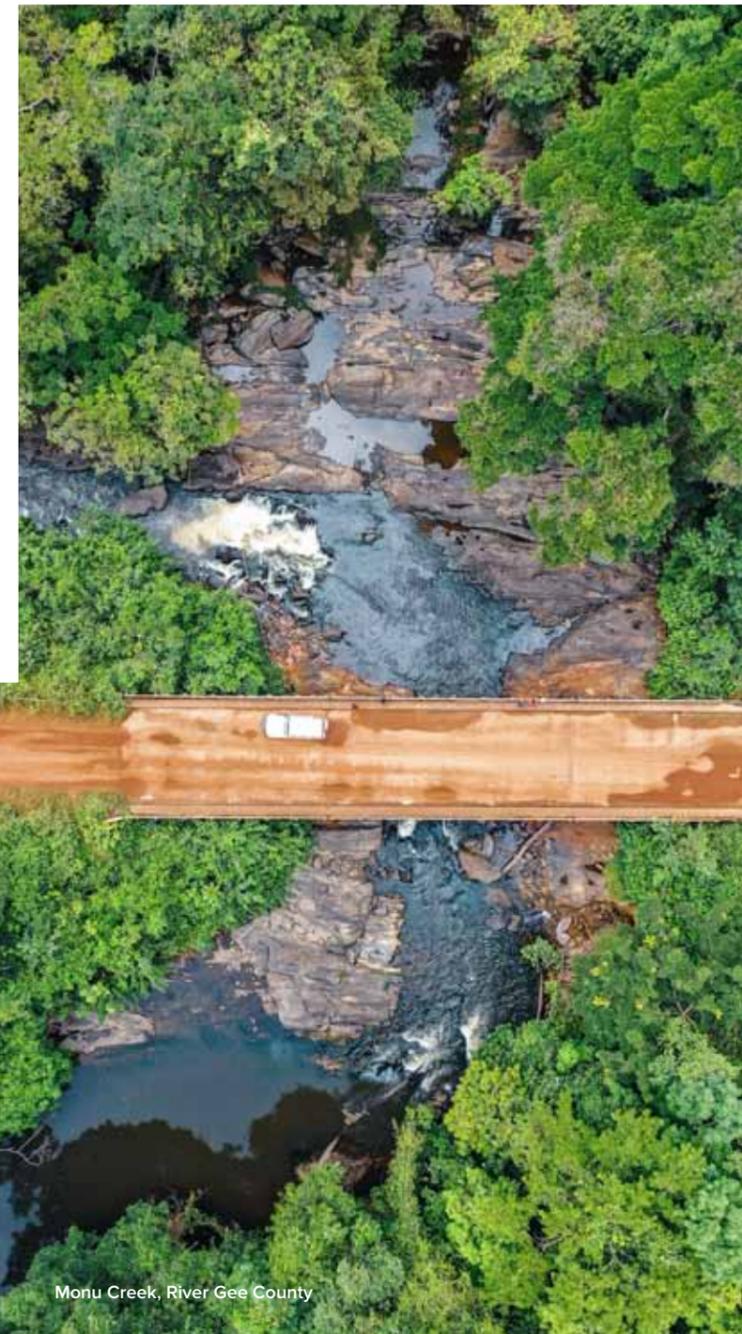
Alvino Hotel is a gem in the northern part of Liberia. Whenever I am here, there is no need to think about Monrovia," Sarah Littlejohn, an English Consultant working in Nimba told Exhibit. ●



Calm waters in Marshall



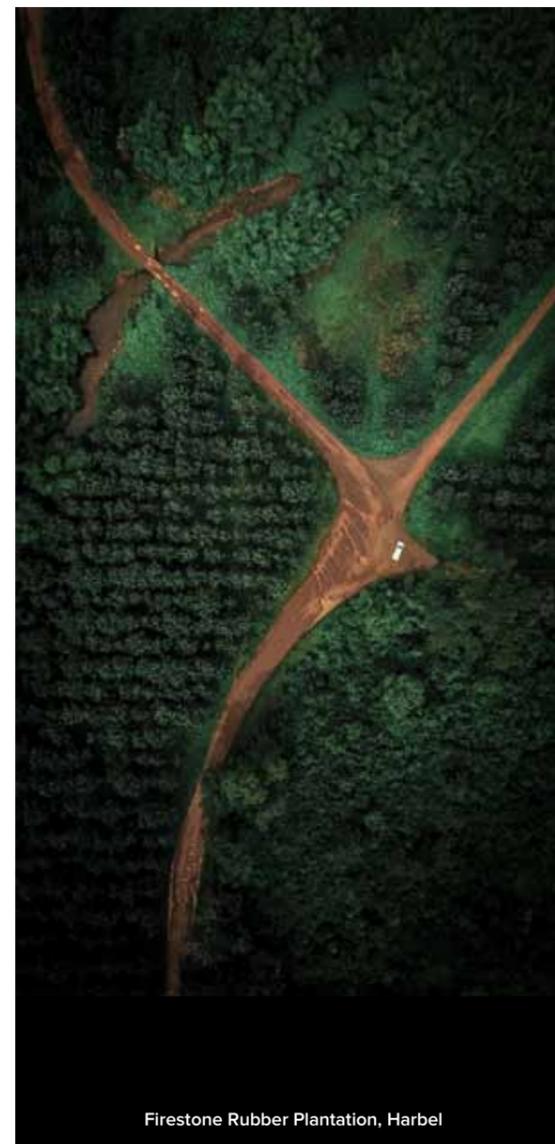
Tropical Rainforest, River Gee County



Monu Creek, River Gee County



A young artist with his masterpiece



Firestone Rubber Plantation, Harbel

Liberia at a Glance

A tiny country of about 43,000 square miles located on the Coast of Africa, endowed with natural resources but heavily relies on foreign aid as a means of survival. This is Liberia- a country established by an American Non-governmental Organization (NGO), the American Colonization Society (ACS) in the 1800s.

The country's economy is teetering on edge from the effects of triple shocks: Ebola Disease outbreak, the drawdown of the United Nations Missions in Liberia (UNMIL) and the tumbling of the price of the country's major export commodities. Along its 188 miles coastline lie beautiful sceneries that are negligibly handled in spite of their wherewithal to become Liberia's more sustainable economic assets.

In this part of the world, there are a people of uniquely diverse culture that allows every tribe to pursue its own way of life, belief, cuisines and social orientation. All white people are first identified as Americans without introduction.

Liberia has a former soccer star, George Weah as its President after seeing Africa's first female President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf lead the country for twelve (12) years but remains home to over 100,000 orphans.

Being the oldest African country makes Liberia best positioned for tourists attraction: the unutilized surfing coast in Grand Cape Mount County, West of the country; artifacts of key figures and event in

African history; the scrap of ship Elizabeth – the vessel that brought the free slaves from America; the largest portion of the Guinea Forest; one time West Africa's most lavished Ducor Hotel that was well-known by well-to-do tourists; the historic Providence Island where the free slaves landed in 1817 among others. Tourism is a mystery in this part of the world, notwithstanding.

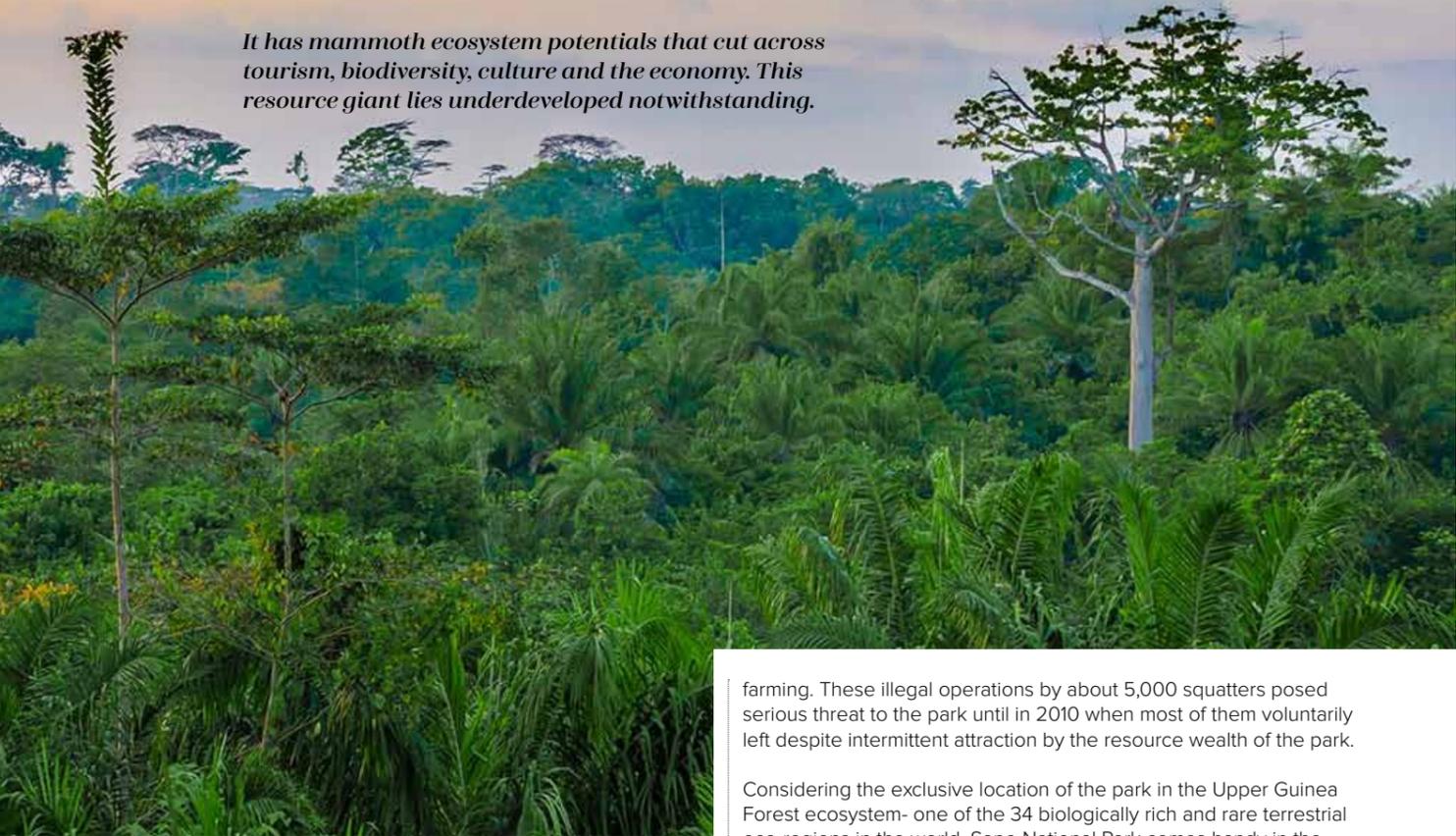
The Liberian Flag is nicknamed the flag of convenience in the maritime industry with the highest number of vessels only second to Panama but the trickle down of their feat is not felt by the citizenry and the country remains the poorest in the world. According to the Liberian Registry, Liberia has earned international respect for its dedication to flagging the world's safest and most secure vessels." Even so, the registry itself is operated by a US company. Despite so many ship owners taking advantage of Liberia's lax maritime laws, very little of the registration fees have benefited the people whose flag adorns approximately 4,000 vessels.

Liberia is home to Lake Piso, a quadrilateral tidal lagoon in Grand Cape Mount County unique for boating and birdwatching and the Sapo National Park that houses diverse species of indigenous and endangered mammals and birds.

Sapo National Park

— RESOURCE GIANT ASLEEP

It has mammoth ecosystem potentials that cut across tourism, biodiversity, culture and the economy. This resource giant lies underdeveloped notwithstanding.



farming. These illegal operations by about 5,000 squatters posed serious threat to the park until in 2010 when most of them voluntarily left despite intermittent attraction by the resource wealth of the park.

Considering the exclusive location of the park in the Upper Guinea Forest ecosystem- one of the 34 biologically rich and rare terrestrial eco-regions in the world, Sapo National Park comes handy in the development of the tourism sector with the right investment.

The impressive sceneries make it a unique attraction for tourists and researcher especially as the second largest rainforest after Tai national Park in neighboring Ivory Coast.

The Sapo National Park protects the best of Liberia's natural heritage: stunning landscapes, extraordinary wildlife and majestic forests and it radiates the basis of the country economic and social wellbeing with the aptitude to attract millions of visitors to the West Coast of Africa while acting as a haven for threatened species.

It is a commonplace that natural areas have a profound effect on our physical and emotional health and wellbeing. In our increasingly frenetic world, our national parks are important sanctuaries where people can take time out, enjoy nature, get fit, relax and revitalize, whilst nature's inherent beauty serves as a source of artistic, creative and spiritual inspiration.

Research on the benefits of contact with the natural environment show that it is likely to have a significant positive psychological effect, serving to reduce stress, anger, frustration and aggression, providing an opportunity for social bonding, and serving as a place for learning and mental stimulation. Children in particular display long-term benefits of playing outdoors.

In addition to the obvious health and wellbeing benefits our national parks bring, they also assist us in less obvious ways, such as acting as natural buffers against extreme weather events, helping to control our climate, providing us with clean water, improving food security and serving as an important resource for the pharmaceutical industry. ●

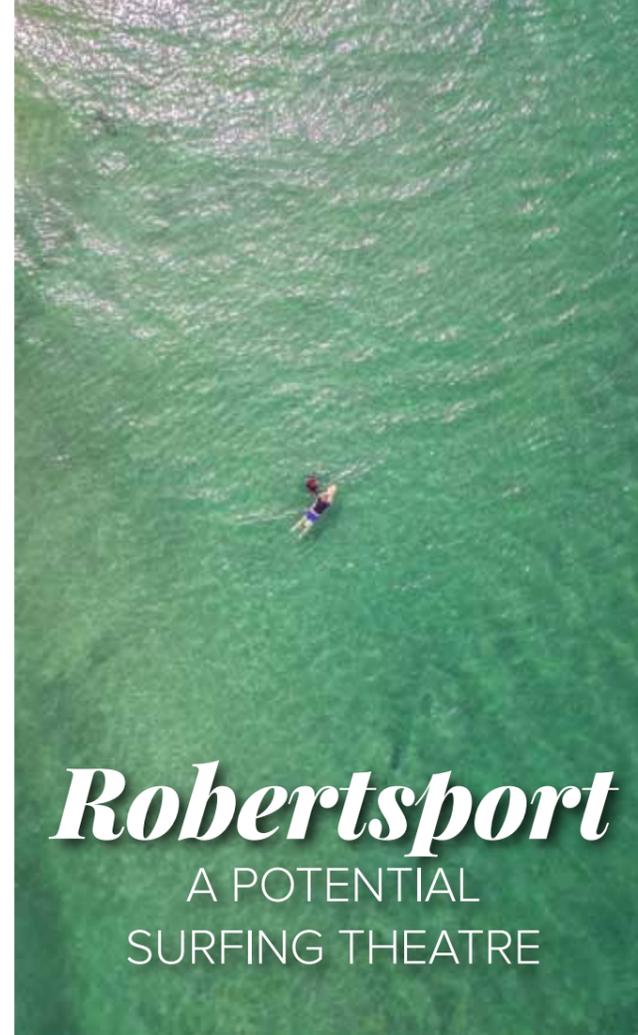


Pygmy Hippopotamus

Established in the 1980s, the Park is the home of some of West Africa's rarest species including pygmy hippos, western chimpanzees, forest elephants, zebra duikers, giant pangolins and a rare form of the African grey parrot.

The park is named after the Sapo Tribe in Sinoe County- its location. It is flat and marshy, bejeweled with lowland swamps and rainforest, making it an ideal habitat that provides comfort for pygmy hippos to burgeon with a tropical climate, and temperatures between 22-28°C.

Since its existence, the park has been riddled with the activities of illegal inhabitants who were involved in mining, logging, hunting and



Robertsport

A POTENTIAL SURFING THEATRE

In Western region, about three hours drive away from Monrovia sits Liberia's heaven of surfing with a coastline adorned with varied wave lengths on the Cape Mount peninsula.

With surfing being touted as a catalyst for tourism, Robertsport, a city named after Liberia's first President Joseph Jenkins Roberts is that place to explore.

Naturally, Robertsport's coast contains five points, including three main points known for surfing: Fisherman's Point, closest to town; Cotton Trees; and Cassava Point.

The architectural layout of the city contains decrepit, plantation-style houses reminiscent of area south of the United States - a historical picture clearly paints of the US ties with - which line wide avenues that lean against the hills on the town's edge.

An abode of predominantly the Vai tribe, Robertsport is naturally blessed with a rich cultural heritage and a variety of beautiful natural sceneries ranging from Lake Piso to the city's spectacularly clean white beaches to the rainforest—all of which make the city an ideal spot for hotels and resorts, which will bring in good returns for sector related business enterprises.

Apart from these, the city has a lot of attractions for tourists ranging from Bay Mouth – an area where Lake Piso and other bodies of water enter the Atlantic Ocean, a majestic and unique view as the gigantic waves of the Atlantic mix with the smaller waves coming from Lake Piso, to a visit to the Massatin Island by canoe, a haven for monkeys and bird species. ●

Bay Mouth, which is accessible only by foot, is a perfect place to sit and just relax, making it an ideal spot for a five star hotel or resort. From the famous ruins of the allied air forces during World War II to a cultural center, Lanefort and Brunt Memorial Hall, which dates back to the early 19th century but still intact, the city is proof of the country's rich potential for tourism.

In September 2018, the Assistant Minister for Tourism at the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, Princess Turkolon, met with Liberian surfers in Robertsport to discuss the potential of tourism in the city and the future of young surfers who are involved in the sport. Turkolon said the mission of the ministry is to develop Robertsport since the city has already been named as a potential hotspot by some of the world's best surfers, adding that "it will take lots of engagements and buy-ins, along with a focus from the government to make this happen."

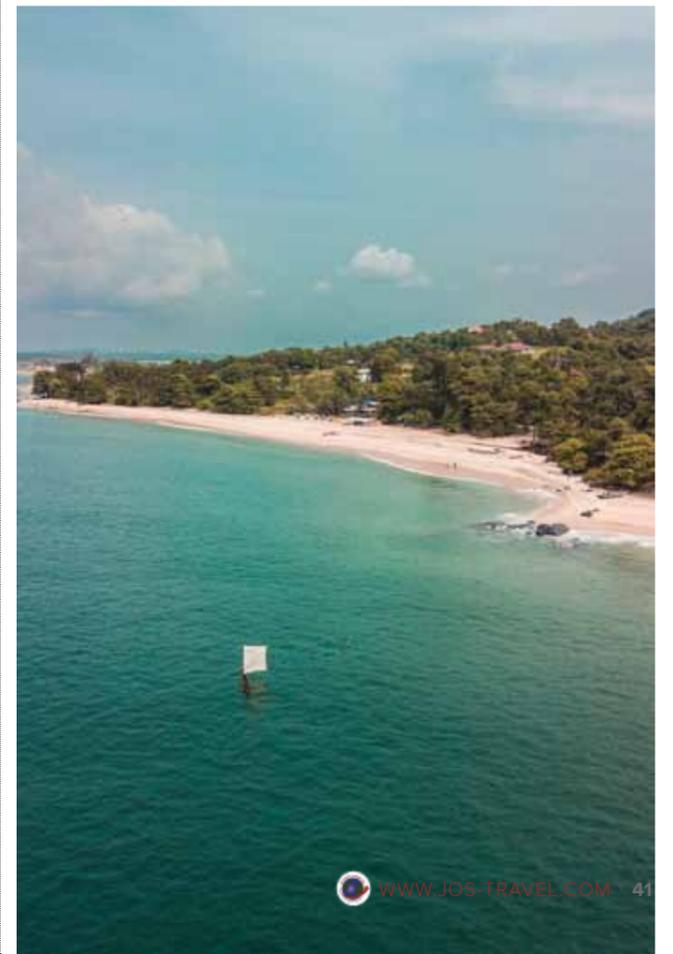
Currently, Robertsport City has 48 male and female surfers, aged 8 to 26, who hit the ocean daily looking for that next big wave.

Sliding Liberia, a film released in 2008 by surfing enthusiast Dan Malloy and his group of filmmakers and surfers, was the first to showcase Robertsport and its world-class waves.

Located between the picturesque Lake Piso, the country's largest lake and the Atlantic Ocean, Sliding Liberia shocked the surfing world with waves that rivaled some of the best in the world.

The film also showed Robertsport's natural environment, canoeing, cultural dancing and other tourism assets.

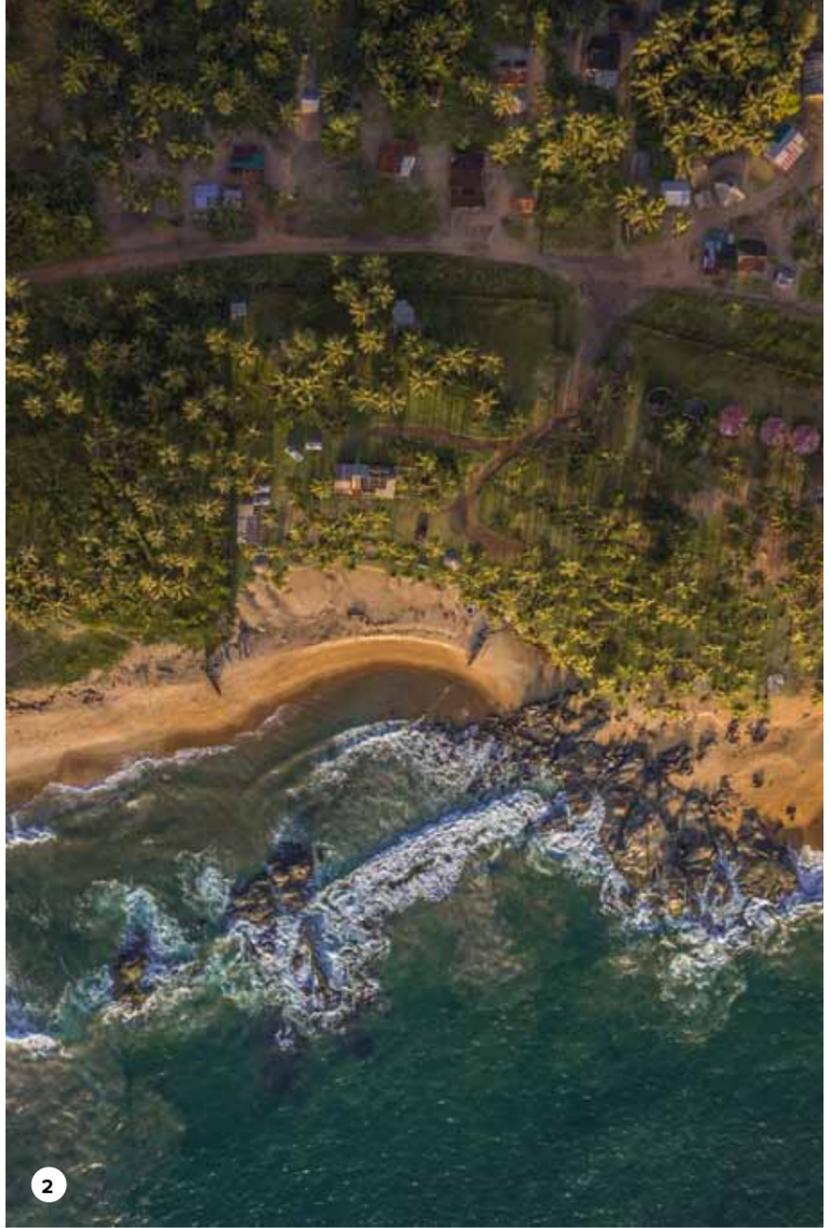
Since then, Liberia has enjoyed visits from the world's best surfers, international media, including BBC, Time Magazine, New York Times and others, which have placed Robertsport in the category of one of the top 10 best places in the world to surf.



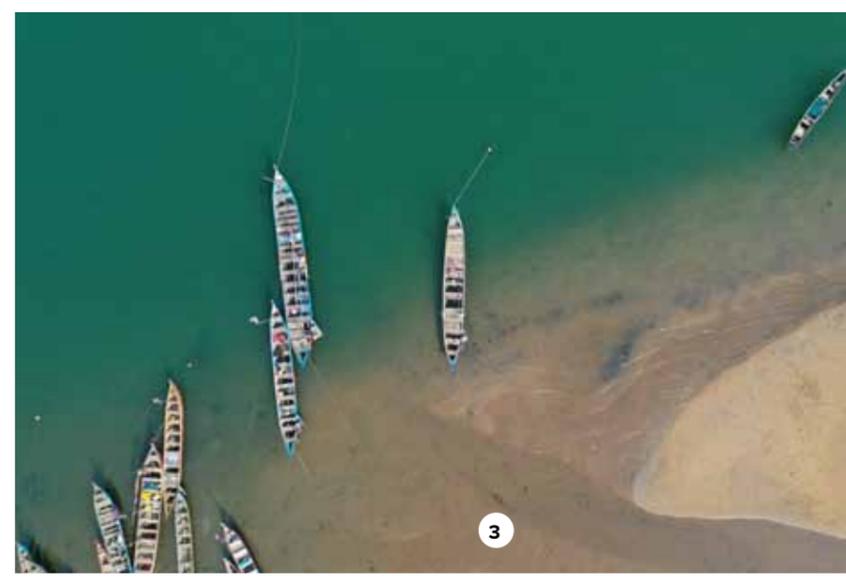
TOUR LIBERIA



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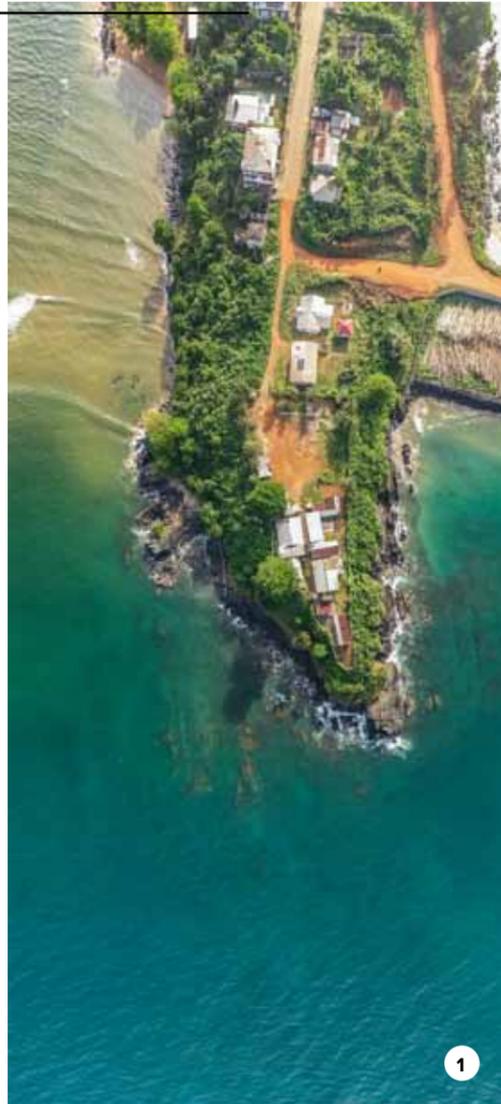
- 1. Sunsets on the horizon over the Atlantic complementing the vibrant nightlife of the city with the highest peak of Monrovia (Ducor) in the distance
- 2. Calm waves smashing the shores of Sun Set Beach in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County
- 3. Canoes line the shores of a fishing town in Marshall
- 4. Twin tower of Monrovia forging its way back into modernization but not without a looming cloud of the glooming past in its shadow (Central Bank of Liberia & E. J Roye Bldg.)
- 5. The home of history, tradition, culture, and elegance at its finest. The Centennial Pavilion was built to mark the 100 year anniversary of Liberia's independence
- 6. "Executive Mansion" renamed: Executive Pavilion" served as the statehouse of Liberia until 1964



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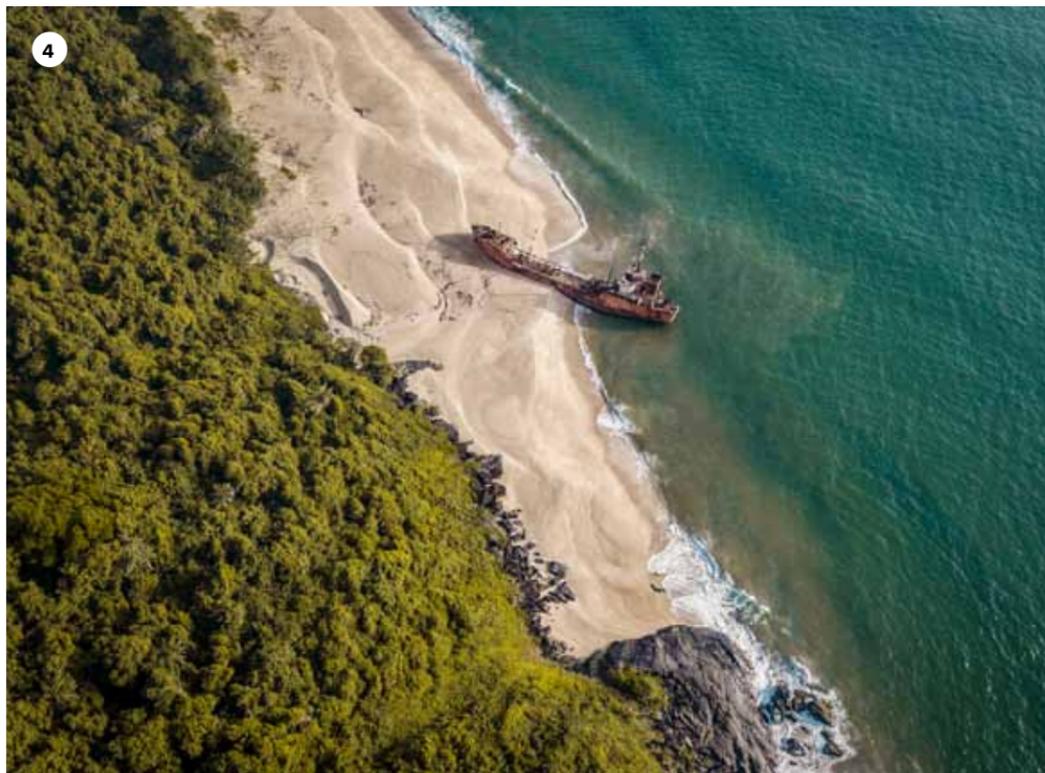
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- 1. The Atlantic Ocean graces the rocky shores of Harper strip in Maryland County
- 2. A church that embodies Christianity in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County
- 3. Tourist accessing the lengths and breaths of the country in a single engine aircraft
- 4. Robertsport clean beaches, blue waters, green vegetation sets the scene for nature lovers
- 5. Sublime scenery and mesmerizing tranquility in Marshall
- 6. Organization of African Unity roots remains entrenched in the soil of Sanniquellie despite abandonment by many. Three symbolic palaver huts refurbished in remembrance of the three founding fathers of the organization

THE HISTORICITY OF *Belle Yallah Prison*

It was villainous prison facility established around 1911 and situated in North Western Liberia. This prison now represents a sombre of Liberia's meandering past and stands as a shadow of itself.

From the onset, the idea was to find haven for hardened criminals but later degenerated into a cave for political prisoners and those who spoke against the ills in society at the time. For many Liberians especially within the proximity of the facility, Belle Yallah Prison was a hub of torment and the most feared prison facility one would ever think of.

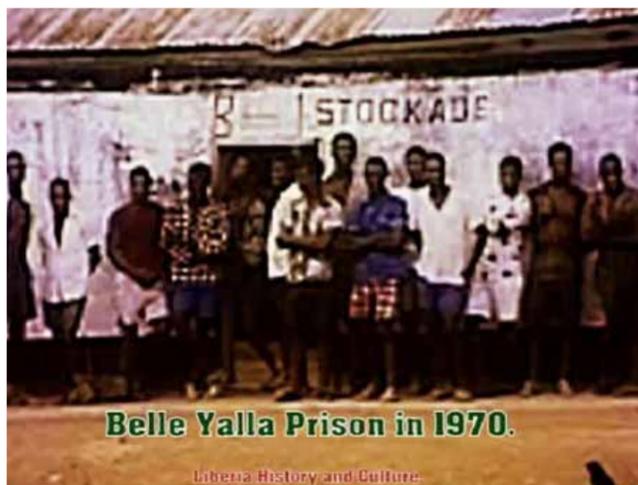
When original rationale behind the establishment of the Belle Yallah evaporated from detaining hardened criminals and possibly rehabilitating them into useful citizens for reintegration, it became a slave abode, sending prisoners to hard labor and the memories fading with time.

The Prison, about three hours walk from the road, preserves a pockmark on the conscience of residents of the vicinity so

much that stigma left behind by the prison puts development of the area in harm's way. "When you tell someone you are from Belle Yallah, the first thing that comes to mind is that you are a prisoner. This is life in this area very difficult. There are no basic social services. Residents are left to fend for themselves," James Flomo, a 50-year old citizen of the town told Exhibit Magazine.

Although the memories of the prison leaves much to desire, plans are afoot to turn into a museum for tourists to have an idea of what the former torture chamber used to look like.

For the first time in Liberia's history Belle Yallah is linked to the rest of the country by a motor road constructed by the Government of Liberia under the leadership of Africa's first female President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. ●



Providence Baptist Church

LIBERIA'S BIRTH PLACE



In 1807 Lot Carey (Cary) became a Christian and felt called to preach the Good News soon after. He preached his trial sermon under the pastorate of the Rev. John Courtney of First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, USA. In 1821 Carey along with Collin Teague and their families sailed for Liberia on the ship Nautilus as the first African American missionaries from Richmond African Baptist Missionary Society, an organization Carey had helped to organize in 1815. Before sailing, Carey and his wife Nancy, Teague, his wife and son Hilary, Joseph Langford and his wife Susan met and constituted themselves into a church – a ministry that would become the birthplace of Africa's oldest Republic, Liberia.

In Liberia and one of the oldest on the continent of Africa. This is venue at which the Declaration of Independence for Liberia was signed in 1847.



According to the church's official website, during the pastorate of Rev. Samuel B. Stubblefield, Sr. the first organ was purchased. It was to the dismay of the "old-timers", who disdained such "unholy disturbance" in the Lord's house. Consequently, two Sunday worship services were held for a while, on at 9:30 a.m. with the organ and the other at 10:30 a.m. without the organ.

In January of 1822 Carey, Teague, Langford and their families arrived at the Providence Island on the Mesurado River in what is today Liberia. Immediately, upon their arrival they established the Providence Baptist Church on a high level ground overlooking the Mesurado River on the north and the Atlantic on the south.

In October 1825 the first sanctuary was dedicated. Rev. Lot Carey said upon its completion, "It is quite a comfortable house, thirty by twenty, and sealed inside nearly up to the plates, with a decent pulpit and seats.

In 1828 when Carey died, Providence had one hundred members. Rev. Colston Waring became pastor thereafter. In 1830 a revival was started and continued for six months. During this revival one hundred members were added to the church. This revival extended to Caldwell, Carey Town (New Georgia), Millsburg, Cape Mount and Grand Bassa.

In 1839 the present stone sanctuary (the old church) was completed. It was in these sacred walls, the nation Liberia was born, and declared African's first independent nation, a beacon light of hope to African and the world. The first Legislative Assembly – The House of Representatives and the Senate was held in this sanctuary. Thus Providence has been revered as "The Cornerstone of the Nation." Providence was the first Christian Church established and founded

In 1968 under the pastorate of Rev. Dr. John B. Falconer, the congregation grew to more than three hundred and more space was needed for Sunday School and other activities. As a result, the Lott Carey Annex was constructed. During Falconer's pastorate Providence started the first church public radio ministry. Deaconesses (female Deacons) were for the first time instituted. Church planting by Providence once again gave birth to several fellowships and congregations, including the Second and Third Providence Baptist Churches in Monrovia, Handii Baptist Church in Bong Mines, among others. Dr. Falconer was a great pulpiteer. He was U.S citizen serving with the American military.

Providence played a pivotal role in the established of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Education Convention, Inc., and the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary. ●



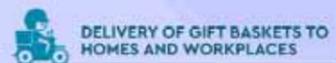
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National Museum

— A DEPOSITORY OF HISTORICAL RELIC

Snuggled at the corner of Broad and Buchanan Streets in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, the museum was established in 1958 by former President William Tubman. The current items on display in the museum are but remnants of the thousands of artifacts which were originally housed at the museum.

During the heydays of the war in Liberia, more 5,000 items were stolen from the museum. Only 100 large artifacts remain in the museum including the country's first national flag which is as old as the nation itself and a table gifted by Queen Victoria which is over two and half centuries old.

For many years after its establishment, the museum remained under the Ministry of Education, formerly the Department of Public Instructions until 1965 when it became the responsibility of the Ministry of Information Cultural Affairs and Tourism. In 1981 this detached to form the National Bureau of Culture & Tourism of which the museum operated under through much of the 1980s until June 1987 when it was dissolved and returned to the control of the Department of Information. In 1972, the museum was relocated to a new



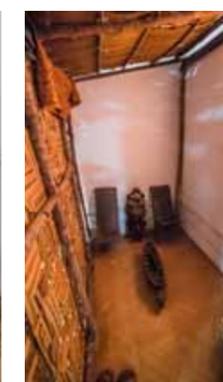
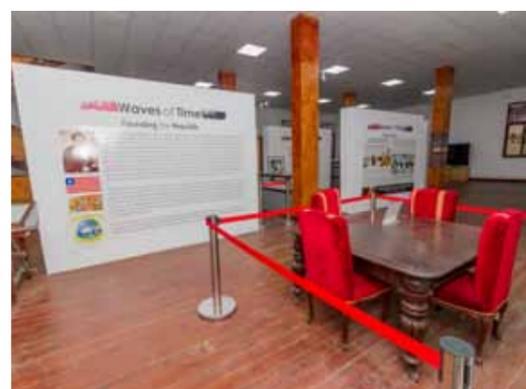
building on Providence Island but four years later this building was removed to facilitate the construction of the People's Bridge over the Mesurado River.

It was later moved to the Old Supreme Court building on Broad Street and reopened on July 25, 1987.

The museum is classified in three tiers, where on the ground floor there is a historical gallery containing presidential papers, private documents and memoirs of past important executives of the Liberian government and photographs and cartographical resources related to Liberia's culture. On display is the nation's first flag dating back to August 1847. There are also other items ranging from postage stamps to an editorial page of Liberia's first daily newspaper, the Liberia Herald. Other items include traditional Liberian household furniture and utensils, and the inaugural attire worn by Africa's First Female President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as well as the jersey of the only African footballer to win World Best, now President, George Weah.

On the next floor is the Ethnographical Gallery and on the top floor the contemporary arts gallery which illustrates Liberian artistic works many of which are product of a contract between the museum and art institutions and art colleges throughout the country where artists are commissioned to produce for the museum purposes.

Other museum facilities include a portable video system, editing and archival materials, cassette recordings and slides of visual and oral arts many of which offer an insight into Liberian cultures such as dance and the use of masks in the country.



CURSORY REVIEW OF *Yekepa* *Past and Present*

Yekepa, a small province in Liberia's Northern County of Nimba, close to the Guinean border, is surrounded by mineral-rich hills and lush, dense jungle. It was a shadow of itself until in 1955 when the Liberian American-Swedish Mining Company (LAMCO) began mining operations following the discovery of the Nimba ore body by Geologist Sandy Clarke.

During its heydays, the town was a major hub of attraction for jobseekers and tourists from the 1950s until the civil war came knocking in 1989.

On the town's outskirts, jungle encroaches on remnants of that time – a vast art deco swimming pool, rusty trains, and the whitewashed skeletal remains of buildings picked clean by looters.

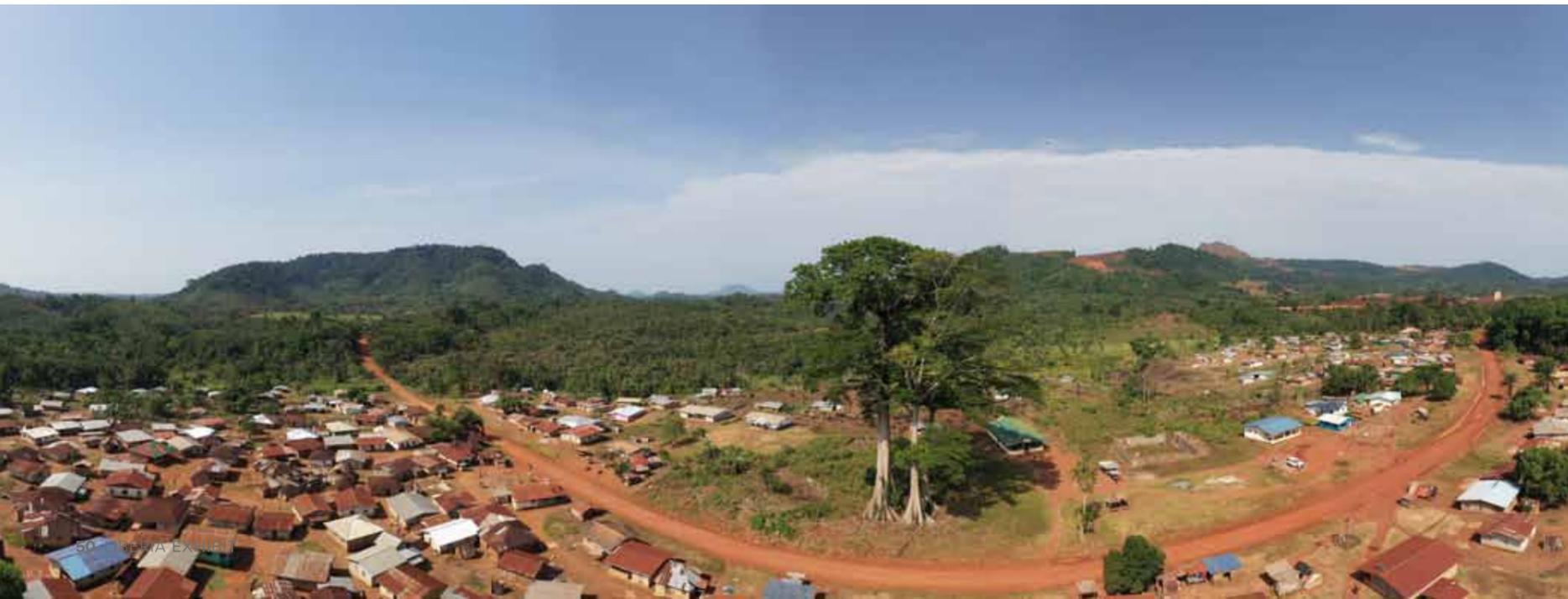
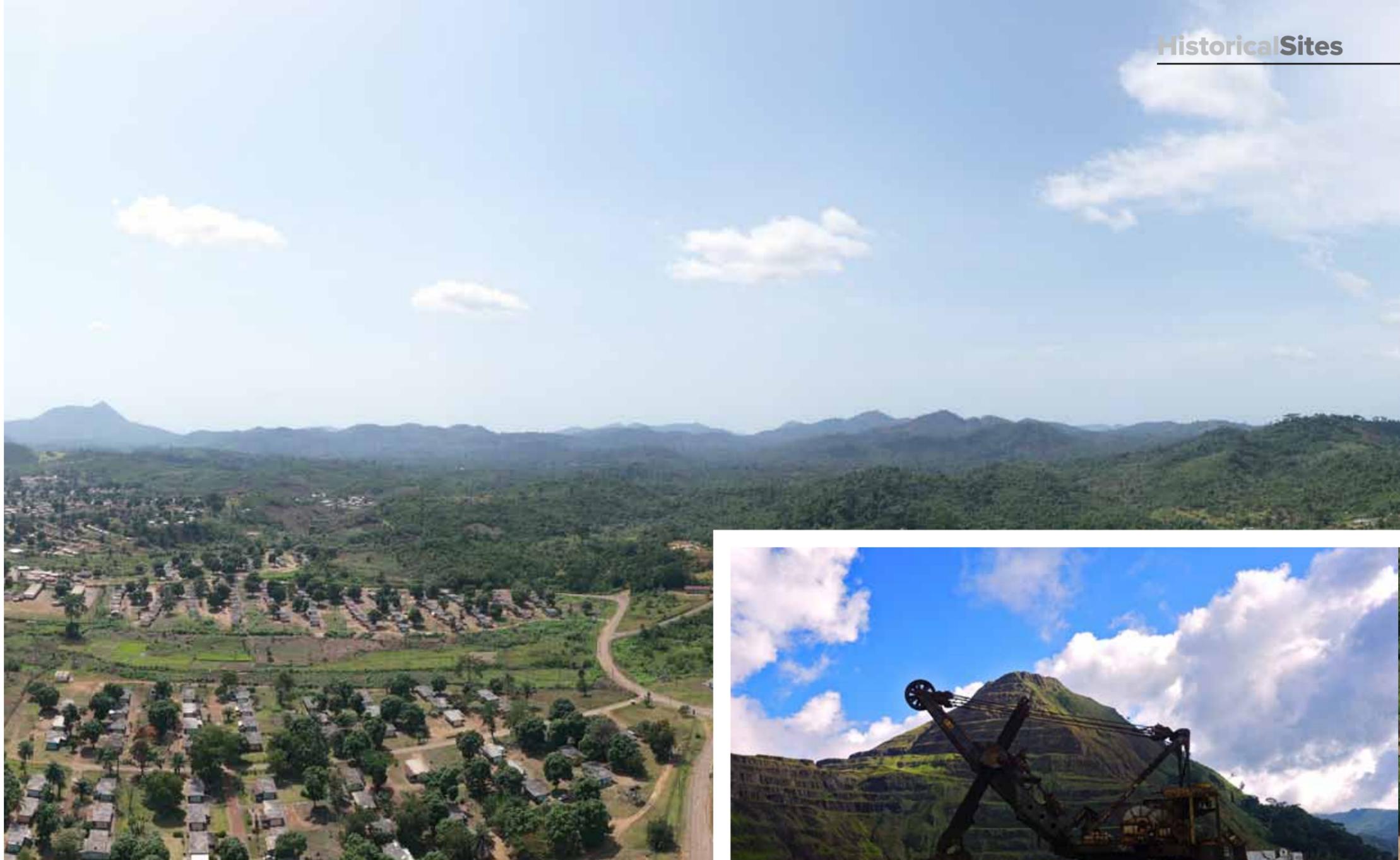
Even though the concession area is overtaken by Indian steel giant ArcelorMittal, the once famous mining town in still struggling to resuscitate from the shackles of the war.

Yekepa is virtually swallowed

by bush including the residential area occupied by ArcelorMittal employees.

This world of iron ore, in the world of Scottish geologist, Sandy Clarke, was heralded as a paradise on earth before the war. The relic of the area still paints a glamorous picture of what existed before.

Area F, which was the residential location for expatriates and once boasted an Olympic size swimming pool, a number of leisure facilities, including a golf course, cinema, air strip and library is mostly in ruins. The dense foliage and destroyed buildings make it difficult to believe that these were once habit-



able buildings and structures. Areas Ea, Eb, Eu, as well as other camps, are literally bushes, despite the presence of workers.

The situation in the concession area has gone beyond most job seekers' expectations, some workers revealed. Many said they thought ArcelorMittal was going to bring the mining town back to its prewar status, but are disappointed that most of the camps have vanished.

"This company spent millions of United States dollars to import prefabricated houses but many of the camps are still in ruin," said Emmanuel Suomie of Yekepa. "If the money used to buy these

imported houses were used to renovate these camps, all the camps would have been rehabilitated."

Safe drinking water remains one of the problems faced by residents of Yekepa, with wells and a nearby creek as the only sources of water.

According to a research report, there are a number of water courses, including the Kahn and Dayea Rivers and many creeks, in northern Nimba County town of Yekepa. Almost all of these drain into the St John River, which starts in Guinea and forms the western border between Guinea and the whole northern

part of Nimba County. Most of the river catchments are in good ecological condition, with the exception of the water courses that drain the former mine workings on Mounts Tokadeh and Nimba, which have higher levels of sediment content and turbidity. All the water courses in the area have high iron concentrations due to the soils and geology already described. The hydrology is complex, with many of the creeks and rivers following a course that may cross the Guinean-Liberian border a number of times. ●

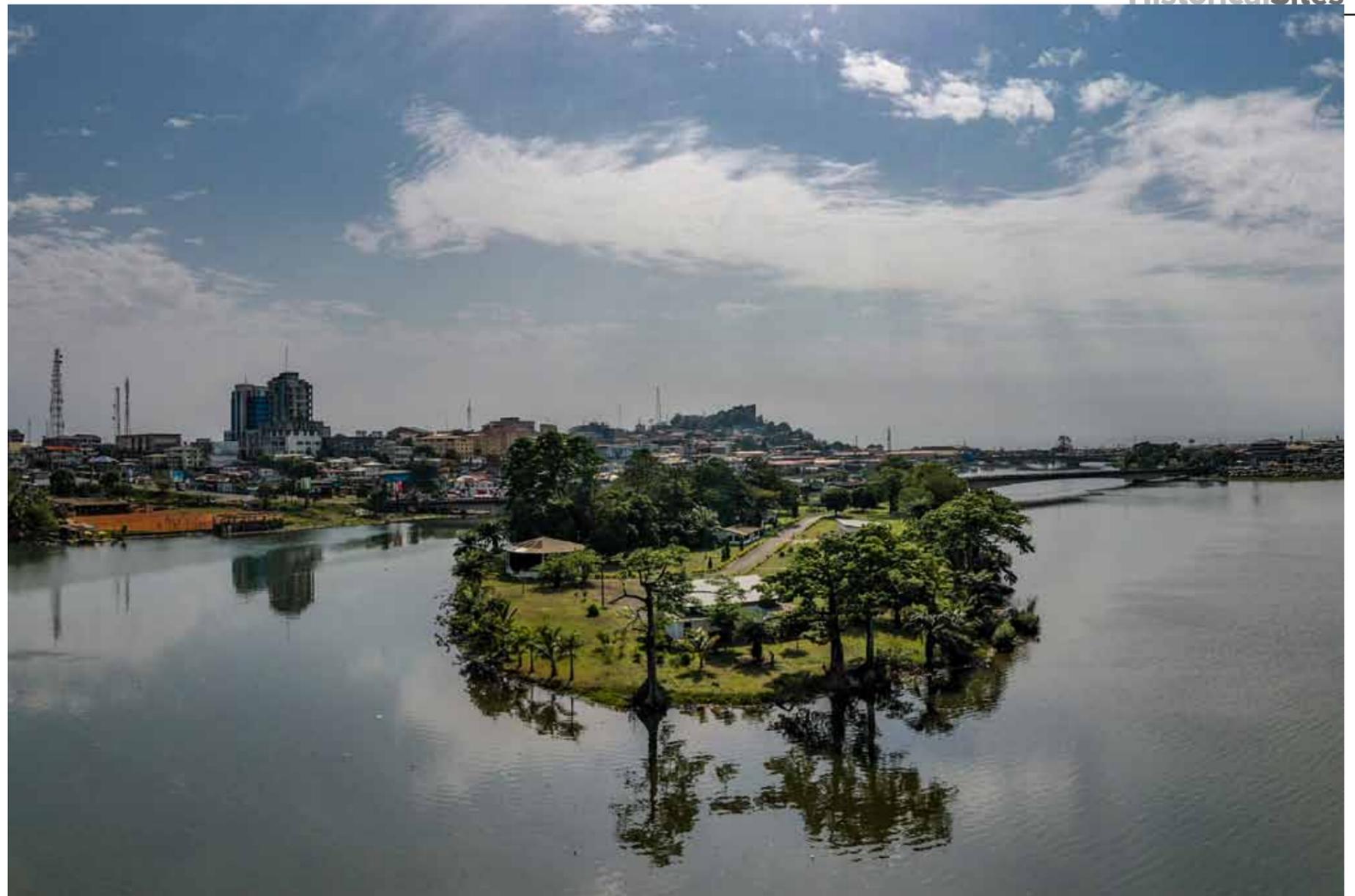
Providence Island

– AN ECONOMIC TIME BOMB WAITING TO EXPLODE

Nicknamed the Door of Return, Providence Island located in the heart of Monrovia and about 500 meters away from the bar mouth of the Atlantic Ocean, is the landing site for freed emancipated slaves that settled in what would become Africa's first republic - Liberia. The historicity of the island makes it an economic time bomb waiting to explode.

Providence Island, formerly known as Dozoa, has hydrological and geophysical distinctiveness that define the western fling of the Mesurado River with sparingly divided mangrove swamps at its southeastern

side. When viewed from the air, this historical site would present a geophysical shape of a guitar stretched across 11.22 acres of land enclosed by the Mesurado River and Stockton Creek. This site, covered by a cement pillar and con-



crete floor believed to be the first concrete work in Liberia's history, is home to the oldest cotton tree of 250 years. In milieu of contemporary history, a mental tree exists at the site symbolizing the need for peace after many years of strife with the He Island on its south over flung by the Gabriel Tucker Bridge that grants easy access to the site as well as few newly built brick huts and a palaver hut in reminiscent of the structures built during the freed slaves era. Undoubtedly, this Island exudes historical and cultural significance in the history of West Africa as the land was one of the first places freed slaved landed on January 1, 1822. It also bears testimony to the reversal of the no point of return when slaves were forcibly taken to the Americas with no hope of coming back. Originally Dozoa which mean Land in the middle of water in the Gola



Vernacular, defines the root of Liberia's existence and the visible cultural diversity in Africa's oldest republic. As Island of 11.22 acres, Providence Island is bordered by the Mesurado River and the Stockton Creek on its South and adorned with amphitheatre constructed at the Gabriel Tucker Bridge connects both Bushrod and Providence Islands to Crown ad Coleman Hills on the other side of Monrovia. The vegetation at this site remains intact and is dominated by indigenous tree species. Even though the original look of this site remains intact, it is vulnerable due to development and its proximity to the overcrowded city of Monrovia and the need for more land is posing threat to its survival. Erosion from the river bank is putting the size of the land in jeopardy especially the landing place for pleasure boat.

A New Beginning

LIBERIA'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT GETS NEW TERMINAL

After several years of dwindling in its wretched state, the Roberts International Airport (RIA) is almost completed to meet international standard of aviation with the construction of a state-of-the-art 5000 square meters passenger terminal that would hold about 320,000 passengers per annum and the excavation of significant session of Runway 04-22, rehabilitation of parts of the taxiways, airside geometric improvements including a new turn-pad at runway end 04, widening of taxi fillets, grading of the runway strip, storm-water drainage improvements, taxiway and runway marking and rehabilitation of the aeronautical ground lighting system.

The goal, according to the Liberia Airport Authority (LAA) Managing Director, Wil Bako Freeman, is to make Liberia a destination of choice for travels. Eventually he said this will attract tourists to the country.

The two storey modern structure is expected to be ready for operation in April 2019, according to the LAA Management. Unlike the old terminal, this one has an escalator and elevator to make passengers conveyance easy, a duty free store and two passengers boarding bridges.

MD Freeman said "on the departure side, there are ten (10) check-in desks for passengers, a CCTV camera that would cover eighteen (18) angles, flight information display system, restaurants." He added that ten (10) of the duty free stores will be occupied by Liberian owned businesses.

Aviation plays a central role in supporting tourism considering the fact that over 57% of international tourists now travel by air. Tourism is particularly important in many developing countries because it is a key part of economic development strategies. Now that Liberia's economy is struggling to recover from several shocks, the new would be that linchpin that can underpin growth and provide jobs for Liberians.

In Africa, an estimated 4.9 million people are employed in areas supported by the steady influx of overseas visitors, most of whom arrive in the region by air, and contributed \$36 billion to GDP in African economies in 2016. In some Caribbean countries, tourism provides one of the few means of economic growth.





The contribution of air transport to tourism employment and GDP: 15.6 million direct jobs in tourism globally are estimated to be supported by the spending of foreign visitors arriving by air. This includes jobs in industries such as hotels, restaurants, visitor attractions, local transport and car rental, but it excludes air transport industry jobs; a further 14.1 million indirect jobs in industries supplying the tourism industry are supported by visitors arriving by air, these direct and indirect tourism jobs supported by air transport generate a further seven million jobs in other parts of the economy, through employees spending their earnings on other goods and services.

Including direct, indirect, and induced effects, air transport supports over 36.7 million jobs within tourism, contributing around \$897 billion a year to world GDP.

Air travelling has become the most popular mode of travel in modern society. Hence, this could also increase Liberia's foreign currency earnings. Recently the share of air transportation in the transportation market has grown significantly. Air transportation has not only made an impact upon the tourism industry and developed countries, but it has made a huge impact upon developing countries and their economy. ●





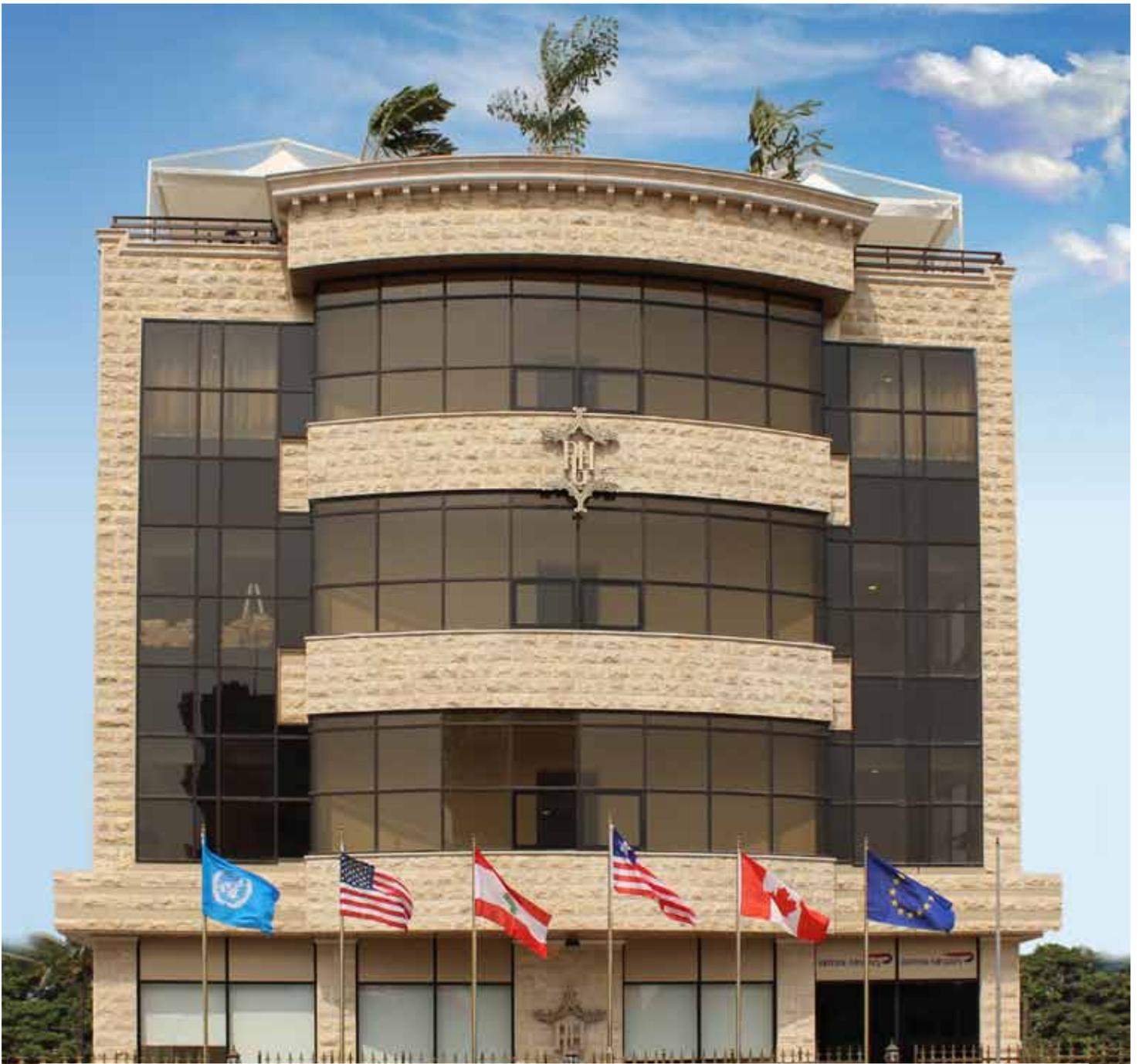
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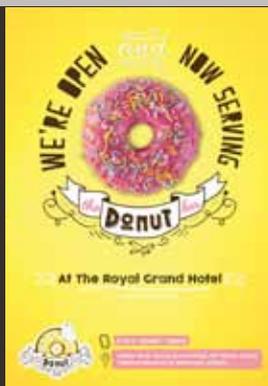
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