



**Introduction by
His Excellency
Wesley M. Johnson,
Ambassador of the
Republic of Liberia
to the United Kingdom**

Since Liberia returned to peace in 2003, a milestone event that was consolidated by elections in 2005 bringing President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to office, and subsequently strengthened by her win in the 2011 polls, diplomatic and trade ties between Liberia and the United Kingdom have continued to grow, a process in which the Liberian embassy in London is playing a key role.

Among the Embassy's many responsibilities and initiatives, it is particularly active in promoting business opportunities for UK investors in Liberia, organising two investment forums in London in pursuit of this objective.

The two UK-Liberia Investment Forums was attended by high-level government officials from Liberia and was an opportunity for direct interaction with potential British investment firms and to elaborate further on the favourable investment regimes introduced by the Liberian government to create a business-friendly environment. The commencement of British Airways flights to Liberia was another positive development coming after the Forum.

The Embassy of Liberia also hosted a reception for the diplomatic community in London to celebrate Liberia's 165th anniversary of independence.

This was attended by Foreign Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, who addressed delegates on the prospects of Liberian oil exploration and other developments in the country. The address set the pace and provided a broader vision in managing expectations of Liberians. Liberia is prepared to forge new partnerships with friends in the global community for the achievement of the needed development that will transform the lives of the Liberian people. Within this context, the Liberian government's Vision 2030 programme seeks strengthened partnership based on trade rather than humanitarian assistance or hand-outs which are unsustainable. Vision 2030 seeks investment in our vast natural resources such as our rich iron ore reserves, our vast and virgin forests, our fertile land and waterways, our

attractive and sometimes undiscovered tourism industry.

Our country is determined to further cement the historic ties between Great Britain and Liberia and we welcome the constant review and update of the UK's Travel Advisory on Liberia to reflect the positive democratic changes that have taken place following two successive democratic elections in the country.

The reopening last year in Monrovia of the British Embassy was another major development, further strengthening ties between our two countries. The government of Liberia welcomes the British government's involvement in promoting democratic governance and development activities in Liberia.

Recognition by the British Government of progress in the areas of peace and security will encourage more British investment in Liberia resulting in the creation of employment opportunities for Liberians, while further strengthening the cordial ties subsisting between the governments of Liberia and Great Britain.

Liberia and Great Britain have agreed to further cement diplomatic relations in all areas of work. Our two countries have also agreed to work closely in the areas of energy, trade and education.

As part of the agreement a trade delegation of British investors is planning to visit Africa and Liberia is one of the designated countries the delegation intends to visit.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Embassy of Liberia, I would like to express our gratitude to the international community for standing with Liberia during the turbulent years of conflict. We are encouraged by the attraction of substantial foreign direct investment in the economy of Liberia in spite of the global financial crisis which has stifled economic growth and development in many developed countries. Foreign direct investment in smaller economies like the Republic of Liberia remains a key determinant for poverty reduction and accelerating growth and development. F