

Liberia independence day

Irrepressible country remains prepared and open for business

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AMBASSADOR OF LIBERIA

The Republic of Liberia, with its history of resilience, celebrates 168 years of Independence with over ten years of relative peace and stability since the end of the civil conflict in 2003.



This year's Independence Day Anniversary celebration will be held in two of Liberia's southeastern counties namely: Sinoe and Grand Kru bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. These two counties are endowed with natural resources, including gold and diamond deposits, timber, rubber, oil palm, a seaport and the Sapu National Park.

More than 50 years of international trade through the port of Greenville makes Sinoe a logical gateway to the world for the southeast region of the country. Sapu National Park

was established in 1983 and covers an area of 1,800 sq. kilometers, providing shelter to many rare wildlife species, significantly improving the scope of ecotourism in Liberia. The park is home to 125 mammal species and 590 bird and endangered species.

Celebrations marking the 167th independence day were scheduled to be held in these two counties, but were canceled as a result of the devastating outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Liberia. Ebola wreaked havoc on the Liberian people and very nearly crippled the already struggling health infrastructure. The outbreak was a random and unforeseen event that struck the nation's economy and its social fabric. Although Liberia's economy had been steaming ahead with relatively strong growth numbers before the Ebola outbreak, its impact disintegrated all the success that had been attained.

With the onslaught of the

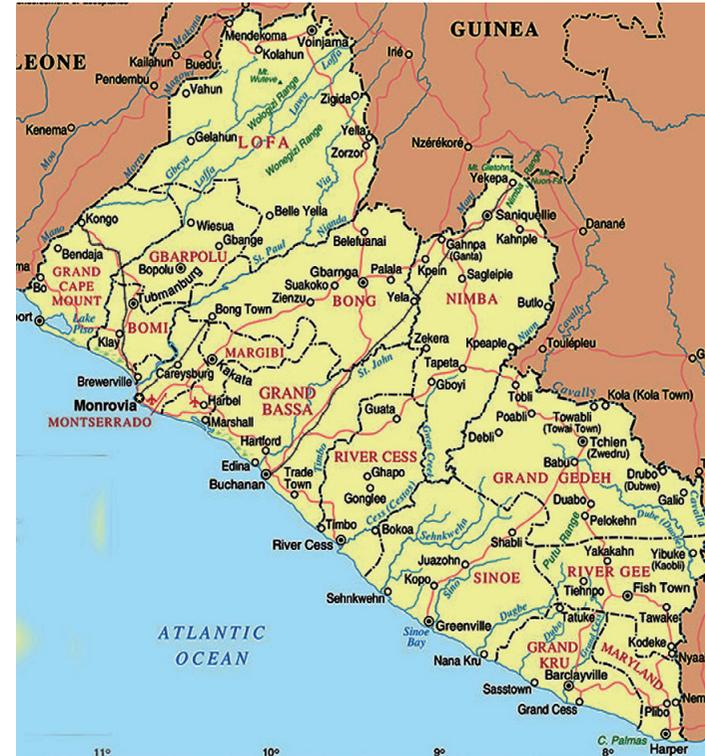
epidemic, the challenge quickly became a national and sub-regional crisis of unprecedented proportions. Our health system collapsed and contractors, consultants and investors left Liberia. Additionally, agricultural activities ceased, trade and travel contracted, fiscal balances weakened and revenue declined. Moreover, the Liberian economy contracted and projected growth declined from 5.9 percent to 1 percent.

However, the government and resilient people of Liberia took the challenge head on, making difficult decisions that ran contrary to long-standing traditions, mobilizing the international community to recognize the disease as a global threat, organizing the best technical professionals to oversee the country's disease management system and importantly empowering the communities who were determined to protect their lives and livelihood.

Today Liberians take pride in the battle they are winning against the deadly disease despite the few setbacks after being declared Ebola free by the World Health Organization on May 9. Nevertheless the most important long-term response to Ebola rests in future plans and economic recovery.

Being part of the Mano River Union States hardest hit by the disease, a sub-regional Socio-economic Recovery Program was formulated to ensure that the countries return to stability and prosperity. The plan is focused on nine key areas: health, gender youth development, social protection, agriculture, trade and private sector development, infrastructure, information communications technology and governance.

Liberia continues the fight against Ebola and is bouncing back to ensure that it remains open and ready for business. Therefore, our invitation remains open and is extended to our Japanese partners.



The Republic of Liberia
EMBASSY OF LIBERIA

**Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Liberia
on the 168th Anniversary
of Their Independence**

