
Liberia Independence Day Special

Growth in a wide range of areas

BLAMOH NELSON

AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE OF LIBERIA



July 26 is the 172nd anniversary of the West African Republic of Liberia's Independence Day. Liberia was founded by freed African slaves shipped back to Africa in 1822 through the benevo-

lence of a then nongovernmental organization called the American Colonization Society (ACS). About 25 years after they were settled and organized into a colony on the west coast of Africa, they unilaterally declared their colony independent from the control of the ACS on July 26, 1847.

The government of Liberia is modeled after that of the United States of America, establishing a form of governance with three coequal branches — the Legislature (Parliament); the Executive; and the Judiciary.

On Sept. 27, 1847, the first election on

the African continent to be based on democratic principles of freedom, fairness and transparency was conducted in the Liberian colony, making Liberia the oldest democracy on the continent.

Liberia has a 350-mile beach on the Atlantic Coast in West Africa just above the equator at about 6 degrees north latitude and 9 degrees west longitude, between the Republic of Sierra Leone in the west; the Republic of Guinea in the north; and the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire in the east.

Liberia has a population estimated by the United Nations at 5 million, with a median age of 18.7 and growth rate of 2.46 percent. The annual rainfall in the capital is 4,624 mm per year and its average temperature is 27 degrees Celsius.

Liberia and Japan have a long, unbroken and productive diplomatic relationship that formally started as far back as 1952. Japan has proven to be a dependable development partner in a wide range of areas including road infrastructure, agriculture, health, education and human resources development and cultural exchange.

Between 1989 and 2003, Liberia was

very unstable due to a civil war. Japan, working with the U.N., was instrumental in bringing the civil strife to an end. Then, in 2014, Liberia experienced a terrible Ebola epidemic and again was assisted by Japan, provided with advanced medical support.

The current portfolio of Japanese development assistance to Liberia includes funding for the construction of 282 low-cost housing units; a master plan study on urban facilities restoration and improvement of short- and medium-term development plans to improve road networks, drainage systems, water supplies and the environment; training for government officials from various Liberian ministries and agencies; and provision of advance medical equipment, to name a few.

We are looking forward to celebrating a joyful and patriotic 172nd Independence Day under the theme "Together We are Stronger." Please join us!

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.