



CONNECT LIBERIA AFRICA WEBINAR SERIES

Liberia's Ambassador George S.W. Patten, Sr., Ambassador Andrew Young, AME Bishop Dr. E. Earl McCloud, Jr., and the Liberian Nurses Association USA team up to combat COVID-19 in Liberia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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August 18, 2020

On March 16, 2020, the Republic of Liberia confirmed its first COVID-19 case and reported its first death on April 4th. On April 8th, President George Manneh Weah declared lock-down measures to take effect on April 10th to last for 3-weeks, including suspension of all non-essential travel and curfews. Schools were closed across the country and churches, Mosques, Bars, and beaches were also closed. A State of Emergency was declared on April 8th including quarantining of 15 counties and a requirement to stay indoors after 3:00 p.m. On April 21, 2020, Liberia's Legislature wrote a Resolution requiring the public to wear masks and Liberia was one of the first countries to start screening passengers for COVID-19 at Roberts International airport.

Despite these measures the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise and the need for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) is still desperately needed for Frontline workers. On June 22, 2020, President Weah extended the State of Emergency by 30-days and in late July 2020, the State of Emergency was lifted.

In support of the clarion call from the Minister of Health, Honorable Wilhemina Jallah, and with the support of the H.E. George Patten, Liberian's Ambassador to the USA in Washington, D.C., who established the COVID-19 Response Team in the Americas, in collaboration with the Liberian Consulate in New York, Minnesota and Georgia, the Union of Liberian Associations in The Americas (ULAA) and others, they are working with strategic partners to help raise funds to provide PPE, ventilators, and other healthcare support. It has been reported that there are under 10 ventilators in Liberia. The United Nations states that 74 million test kits and 30,000 ventilators will be needed by the Continent's over 1.3 billion people in 2020.

To share best practices on what the Diaspora is doing to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the Liberia Consulate in GA will host a Webinar entitled COVID-19: **Liberia Response on Wednesday, August 26, 2020, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** Keynote speaker will be H.E. George S.W. Patten, Sr., Liberia's Ambassador to the USA in Washington, D.C., along with outstanding panelists including Ambassador Andrew Young, Chairman, The Andrew Young Foundation, Honorable Dr. E. Earl McCloud, Jr. 127th Bishop - AME Church Presiding over Liberia, Togo, South Africa and the Ivory Coast, Honorable Rudolph Sherman, Consul General Liberia, New York, Honorable Jackson George, Honorary Consul General Liberia Minnesota, Ms. Amelia Togba-Addy, President, Liberian Nurses Association USA and Mr. Tony Nimley, Vice President, Liberian Nurses Association USA. Honorable Cynthia L. Blandford, Honorary Consul General Republic of Liberia in Atlanta, Georgia and President of Global Strategies for Good, LLC, will be the moderator.

The African economy was set to grow at about 3.4 % in 2019 and projected to increase to 3.9% in 2020, but COVID-19 has had a very negative impact. As the World Bank expects the African Continent as a whole to experience its first recession in 25 years, the African Union fears some 20 million jobs will be lost in the course of this year. According to the African Development Bank, Africa only has 375 pharmacy companies for a population over 1.3 billion people while India has 11,000 and China has 7,000 pharmacy companies for combined populations of 1.4 billion. Africa can and must do better to strengthen their healthcare systems. Industries that have been affected the most by the virus include agriculture, education, and healthcare. Across the African Continent, UNESCO reports that an estimated 297 million students have been affected by school closures as a result of the pandemic.

As we look to the future, Liberia was known before the war as a healthcare destination in West Africa, where people would come near and far for annual medical visits. With support from the Ministry of Health, Liberia's Center for Disease Control and Liberia's Institute for Public Health, Liberia could once again be positioned a leader in healthcare in West Africa. In addition, Liberia has been producing rubber for the world for almost 100 years. It is time to produce rubber gloves, condoms, and other protective gear to help combat future pandemics and to scale-up manufacturing and job opportunities for the future. Natural medicines for combating diseases should also be highly considered as a positive way forward.

For further information and to register for the Webinar, please visit www.LiberianConsulateGA.com. This is the first in a series of Webinars. Others will be announced soon.

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