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Brussels Airlines' CEO Gustin Announces New Interventions in its Liberia Operations; Meets With President Sirleaf

Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States , Sat, Sep 12, 2015

(MONROVIA, LIBERIA – Wednesday, September 9, 2015)

Brussels Airlines has announced new interventions in its operations in Liberia including an increase in the number of flights to Liberia from two to four times weekly (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays); while the airline's crew will now use Monrovia as a base (sleep over). There will also be a stop-over in Freetown en route to Monrovia and a non-stop flight from Monrovia to Brussels. These decisions, including the removal of Liberia from its Travel Advisory List, were taken last week by the Belgium authorities based on the country's "Ebola free status". According to an Executive Mansion release, the Brussels Airlines' Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Bernard Gustin informed President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of these decisions when he paid her a courtesy call at her temporary office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday, September 9, 2015. Mr. Gustin, who is also Chairman of the Management Board of Brussels Airlines, was accompanied by the airline's Country Manager, Federick Vloeberghs. The Brussels Airlines' CEO expressed disappointment at the level of media coverage given the Ebola crisis in Liberia and the two other countries affected by the virus including the different restrictive measures which is not the same coverage when the good news of freedom from Ebola and the lifting of restrictions were announced. "Good news must be news just as the bad news," he pointed out. Mr. Gustin further informed President Sirleaf that he joined the airline's Tuesday flight as a crew member to mark the resumption of the four weekly flights schedule and the use of Liberia as a crew base with the crew spending the night. "Madam President, I am pleased to inform you that all crew members on board Tuesday's flight including myself spent the night in Monrovia. We are very pleased to resume this operation because the aircraft was also filled to capacity," he informed the Liberian chief executive. He also indicated that towards December 2015 and January 2016, Brussels Airlines will lead an economic mission to Liberia as the country seeks to enhance national recovery after the very devastating Ebola crisis that claimed the lives of over 4,000 persons with consequences on the country's economy. For her part, President Sirleaf thanked the CEO of Brussels Airlines and the entire management team for the new interventions and for standing firmly by Liberia during the entire Ebola crisis. "Brussels Airlines has been a real friend to Liberia. When Ebola surfaced, you did not suspend your flights to Liberia and kept the country connected to the outside world. Again, you are normalizing your operations in Liberia and I want to thank you for this," she said. The Liberian leader acknowledged that the new pronouncement was very good news for Liberia, adding that increasing flights to four days a week and using the country as a crew base was a clear message to the rest of the world that Liberia is once again free and back in the business of development and progress. "This action is a vote of confidence from Belgium and the Brussels Airlines family to the whole world. Liberia is currently without its own national airlines and because of the solidarity and support you have shown Liberia, we consider Brussels Airlines as our own national airlines," the Liberian leader pointed out. She informed Mr. Gustin that the head of the Liberia Airport Authority and its new



Board are working hard to resolve the issue of the runway as well as building a new terminal as a way of improving conditions and facilities at the Roberts International Airport. She also thanked the airlines for the demonstrated patience over the years.

President Sirleaf poses with Brussels Airlines CEO Gustin and Country Manager Vloeberghs following their meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2015.



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