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Ambassador Patten Solicits More help to Fight Corona in Liberia

Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States,

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by Al-Jerome A. Chede

WASHINGTON DC - Amid the rise in COVID-19 cases in Liberia, His Excellency George S. W. Patten, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Liberia accredited to the United States of America, Canada and Mexico, is busy knocking on the doors of powerful US members of Congress, and the State Department, making the case for urgent financial and material aid for Liberia.

Speaking recently in several teleconference meetings with

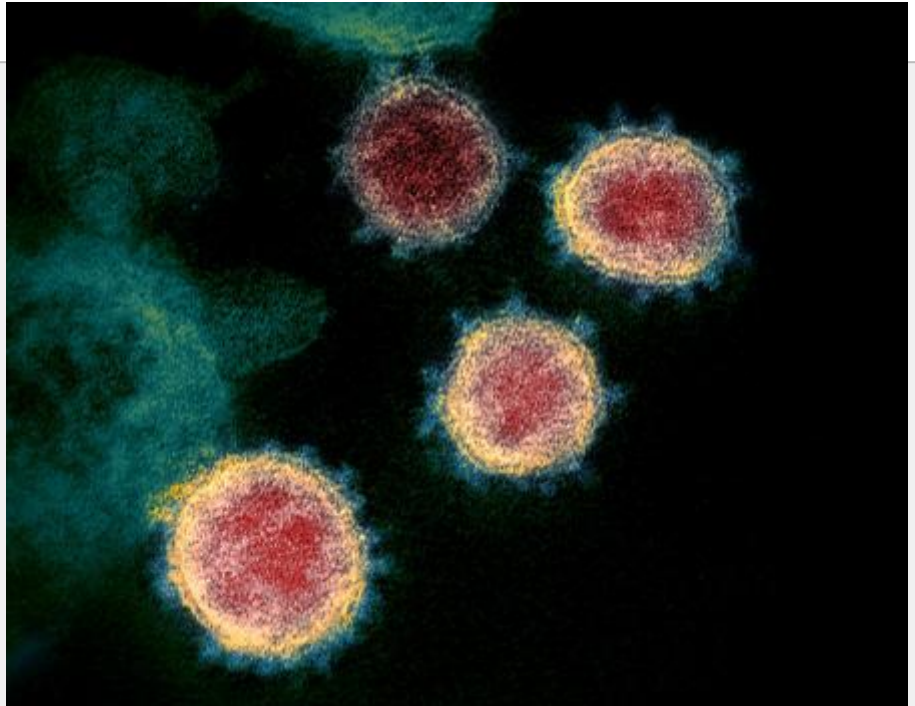
staffers of influential Congressional leaders, Ambassador Patten stressed the need for Congress to beef up its budgetary assistance to Liberia during these difficult times.

In a meeting with staffers of Republican Senator Rob Portman of Ohio as well as New York's Democratic Representative Nita Sue Melnikov Lowey, the Liberian Ambassador recounted America's magnanimity towards Liberia especially during struggling periods. Ambassador Patten cited the significant role America played in ending the Ebola pandemic that ravaged Liberia few years ago. He praised the United Nations (UN) the World Health Organization (WHO), the United States America and other bilateral partners for helping Liberia put in place vital lifesaving protocols that are currently been used to contain the Corona pandemic.

The veteran Liberian diplomat was quick to recognize the challenges America is currently experiencing in tackling Covid19 domestically but quickly stressed the need for a robust global partnership in battling the disease.

Ambassador Patten appealed for urgent supplies of goggles, face masks, gloves, sanitizers, ventilators, shoe covers and oxygen concentrators as well as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) among other essential medical supplies.

The Ambassador disclosed that there are only three ventilators in the country and appealed to the members of Congress to step up emergency aid and budgetary support to Liberia. He revealed that Liberia needs about 17



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The microscopic view of the virus which causes Coronavirus disease.

million dollars to fight the Covid19. He said the money will help government conduct thorough screenings of every person at various entry points in the country and help provide treatment and crucial social services for the Liberian people.

In a meeting with staffers of Republican Representative of New Jersey Chris Smith and Texas Representative Kay Granger, Ambassador Patten explained that Liberia has a Health system that is challenged coupled with a struggling economy. He pointed out that the Corona onslaught may leave debilitating economic and health catastrophes on Liberians, thus the need for urgent financial and material aid to the country.

Also speaking during the meetings, the Advisor to Chief Executive officer for Arcelor Mittal, Joseph Matthews, promised to keep his company opened and running during the crisis. He revealed that he has directed and activated his company's global procurement machine to source, procure and ship medical supplies that the country needs. The Arcelor Mittal's boss assured that his company will stand shoulder to shoulder with Liberia just as it did in the fight against Ebola.

Ambassador Patten noted that President George M. Weah took necessary steps to suspend all but emergency flights Liberia, constituted a special committee to coordinate the fight against the disease and suspended all public gatherings.

In separate remarks, the Congressional staffers noted that the US was consumed in its own national fight against the disease but opined that the need for greater global effort could not be overemphasized. They promised to convey the urgency of the requests from Ambassador Patten to the members of Congress. One Staffer noted that over one million dollars was provided earlier by the US and advised that the government of Liberia work closely with USAID in directing funds to areas that needed it urgently while Congress is working on a legislative package to help Liberia.

They recognized the need to assist Liberia in the fight against COVID19 and called on Ambassador Patten to do a detailed documentation of the pressing needs of the country so that they could help their bosses make informed decisions in voting for increased aid to Liberia.

They expressed enthusiasm and hope that the struggle against COVID19 will come to an end soon as Congress was currently working on a couple of legislations to aid struggling countries fight the pandemic. They praised Ambassador Patten for being the first Ambassador to approach them on the matter and offered to do everything possible to make sure that Liberia is highlighted in any discussion regarding aid to African countries.

In separate letters to the members of Congress following the series of meetings, Ambassador Patten again emphasized the need for financial assistance to Liberia to fight the COVID-19, and as stimulus to absorb the impact of the coronavirus on the national economy.

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