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by Al-Jerome Anastas. Chede Sr.

Washington DC, October 25, 2022. The Counselor for Diaspora and Immigration Affairs at the Embassy of Liberia in Washington DC, Mrs. Nadia Kamara has praised the United States of America for topping the list of countries and organizations that contributed to the development initiatives of Liberia in 2020. Speaking recently at the 'Mississippi West Africa Seminar Series' held by the Hinds Community College in Utica, Mississippi, Mrs. Kamara noted that America alone through

USAID, contributed a whopping \$182.5 million to the Official Development Assistance package of Liberia in 2020 followed by the World Bank \$108.4 million and German with \$50.73 million.

Mississippi in Liberia is a project that is focused on past and present connections between Mississippi and West Africa with an emphasis on Liberia. During the nineteenth century, former slaves from Jefferson County, Mississippi, were sent to Liberia by the Mississippi Colonization Society as part of a colony called Mississippi in Africa. Many of their descendants continue to live in Liberia today and have no knowledge of these historical connections with Mississippi and the broader United States.

Counselor Kamara further extolled US-Liberia historic relationship, emphasizing that since 1864 America continues to support Liberia in consolidating its democratic process; transparency, and accountability in governance institutions; promoting broad-based, market-driven economic growth; improving access to high-quality education and health services. She added that America supports Liberia in professionalizing the country's military and civilian security forces, while helping Liberia build capacity to plan, implement, and sustain its own development efforts.

The Lead of the Mississippi in Liberia Project is Dr. Dr. James Andrew Whitaker – Instructor of Anthropology & Sociology, Department of Social Science, Hinds Community College. As part of the project, Dr. Whitaker plans to take some students from Hinds College to Liberia in May 2023 to visit the University of Liberia and some



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Honorary Consul Cynthia Blandford and Counselor Nadia Kamara(middle), flanked by Deans of Colleges

Colleges in the country. Using open-ended interviews, the project's methodology centers around fieldwork to collect data on historical memory, oral histories, and enduring symbolism of Mississippi in Sinoe County, Liberia. Photography provides documentation of physical markers related to Mississippi in Liberia. The fieldwork data will be used to produce academic peer-reviewed publications. The project also consists of student-assisted public education initiatives focused on links between Mississippi and West Africa. These include a public exhibition and a seminar series at Hinds Community College.

Dignitaries attending the program included, Commissioner Willie Simmons, Transportation Commissioner of the State of Mississippi, Ms. Carol Moore Anderson, Director, U.S. Department of Commerce- Mississippi Export Assistance Center, Mr. Stephen Vacik, President of Hinds College, various Deans, and Professors at Hinds College.

Also at the occasion was Liberia's Honorary Consul in Georgia, Cynthia Blandford who spoke mainly on her published memoir titled, 'My heart beats for Africa'. The Memoire mainly highlights her journey from childhood to diplomacy. Honorary Consul Blandford played a pivotal role in organizing the seminar.

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