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Liberia, United States Department



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Assistant US Secretary of State for African Affairs, Molly Phee stand with Liberia's Foreign Minister Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Washington DC. April 11, 2023. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dean of the Cabinet of the Republic of Liberia, Ambassador Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr. on Wednesday, March 22, held talks in Washington D.C. with United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Madam Molly Phee. The meeting between the two took place at the U.S. State Department and focused on ways to strengthen democracy - with emphasis on the upcoming elections, as well as issues of good governance and respect for fundamental human rights.

Other areas of focus during the meeting were Liberia's strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty in its war with Russia and the Weah-Administration's admonition to regional leaders - ECOWAS to respect constitutional term limits and democratic order.

Foreign Minister Kemayah was accompanied to the meeting by the Commissioner of the Liberia Maritime Authority, Lenn Eugene Nagbe, Information Minister Ledgerhood Julius Rennie, and the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Liberian Embassy in Washington D.C., Isaac C. Yeah, Madam Phee was accompanied by Mr. Brian Neubert, United States Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and Director of the Office of West African Affairs and Madam Caroline Dow, Liberia Desk Officer at the United States Department of State.

During the talks, Foreign Minister Kemayah informed Assistant Secretary of State Phee of President George Manneh Weah's unflinching commitment to ensure the conduct of a free, fair, transparent, peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in October 2023.

Ambassador Kemayah stressed the importance of strengthening partnership with the United States, especially building on the irreversible gains of their longstanding strong traditional and bilateral ties as Liberia moves towards Presidential and Legislative elections in October 2023.

Foreign Minister Kemayah informed the U.S. Officials that efforts are afoot through the United Nations, ECOWAS, United States, European Union, United Kingdom and other Diplomatic missions in Liberia for the Political Parties in Liberia to commit themselves to ensuring a violent- free electoral process through the signing of a Peace and Unity Accord.

The Liberian Chief Diplomat reiterated Liberia's unflinching commitment and support for the position of the United States, which backs Ukraine's sovereignty and right to defend itself against Russia's "unprovoked" aggression. Amb. Kemayah assured the United States Officials that Liberia will continue to remain engaged with its "brothers and sisters" in Ukraine and the international coalition for a peaceful solution to the war in Ukraine.

With respect to Liberia's engagements with ECOWAS concerning regional peace and security, Foreign Minister Kemayah informed Assistant Secretary of State Madam Phee of President Weah's unreserved commitment in supporting and continuing to be an integral part of ongoing initiatives geared towards the restoration of democracy and constitutional order in neighboring Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Ambassador Kemayah noted that President Weah holds the strong view that unconstitutional means of clinching to power is a threat to peace and democracy.

Foreign Minister Kemayah then used the Occasion to seek the support of the United States for the Candidature of the Republic of Liberia for the Seat of Non-Permanent Member at the United Nations Security Council for the period - 2026/2027 for Liberia's Candidature for "Category A" Status at the International Maritime Organization. Elections for the two positions will be held later this year.

In response to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Phee's count on corruption, Ambassador Kemayah stressed that President Weah remains resolute in the fight against corruption, noting that President Weah has given "teeth to bite" to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and the General Auditing

Commission. Minister Kemayah further stressed that "Public Service is for Public Good and that the Public Sector is a Place for Service and Loyalty to Country.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Kemayah reaffirmed Liberia's intent to open a Career Consulate in the U.S. State of Minnesota to enable Liberians in Minnesota and the MidWest get the much-needed access affordable consular services.

Ambassador Kemayah further informed the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Madam Phee of the Reform Process at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia initiated by him when he assumed Office on October 6, 2020. He named the Twenty Percent - 20% reduction in the prices of Liberian Passports across the board, strengthening the acquisition and Administrative Procedures for issuing Passports, establishing and launching of Twenty-five (25) new Passport Application Centers in VFS Global facilities in locations around the World where Liberians are concentrated, strengthening the Financial Management System, and the Revised Honorary Consul Regulations as part of the reform.

Foreign Minister Kemayah reaffirmed Liberia's support for the Candidature of the United States, represented by Madam Amy E. Pope for the position of Director-General of the International Organization for Migration - IOM at its elections in Geneva later this year, adding that " I met with the United States Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, Madam Michele Sison and the Candidate of the United States, Madam Amy E. Pope in Doha, Qatar and assured them of Liberia's strong support for the Candidacy of the United States. We are confident that Madam Pope possesses all the relevant competencies, skills, and experience to head the IOM. We believe the ascendancy of Madam Pope to head the IOM will also bring benefits to the Government and People of Liberia".

In response, The United States Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Molly Phee welcomed Foreign Minister Kemayah and Delegation to the U. S. Department of State and promised to follow-up on the request of the Government of Liberia for approval to open a Career Consulate General in Minnesota.

Madam Phee expressed commendation for Liberia's support for the Candidacy of Madam Amy E. Pope, and for Liberia's role in ECOWAS and the Mano River Union.

Assistant Secretary of State Phee said President Joseph R. Biden, was pleased to welcome President George Weah and Foreign Minister Kemayah at the White House on December 14, 2022, stressing that it was a Special Meeting with President Biden on the margins of the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State thanked the Government of Liberia for the many initiatives recounted by Foreign Minister Kemayah, aimed at improving governance in the country and promised the support of the United States Government.

Assistant Secretary of State Phee said the United States appreciates Liberia's push for a Non-Permanent Member Seat on the United Nations Security Council for the period; 2026/2027, and for a "Category A" Status at the International Maritime Organization.

She emphasized United States support for Liberia's programs on anti-corruption as she urged the Government to do more to ensure that the programs are "enhanced and promoted".

Madam Phee commended Liberia for the efforts and gains being made in abolishing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Liberia; stressing that it was a major achievement by Liberia to have recently witnessed the banning of FGM in Montserrado County by the Traditional Leaders of Liberia. She urged the Country through its Government and Traditional Leaders to continue with such endeavor in other parts of Liberia where FGM is also being practiced.

The United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs informed Foreign Minister Kemayah that some American companies are interested in investing in Liberia's Railway /Transport Sector.

Madam Phee stressed that the interest of the American Companies to invest in Liberia is in line with the Investment and Trade Initiative of the United States for Africa, which was announced by President Biden at the United States-Africa Leaders' Summit held in December last year.

Responding, Foreign Minister Kemayah welcomed the information and desire of American Private Companies to directly invest in Liberia; asserting that "when His Excellency President Dr. Weah assumed the Leadership of the Republic of Liberia on January 22, 2018, the President in his Inaugural Address informed Liberia and the World that Liberia was open and ready for business. Liberia's Foreign Minister further informed the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State that President Weah in that Inaugural Address invited Foreign Direct Investors to come and invest in Liberia, noting that the President has since continued to express Liberia's openness and preparedness for Foreign Direct Investments.

Ambassador Kemayah emphasized that it is the Primary Responsibility of Liberia, like any other Country in the World, to create the enabling environment in Liberia for the business climate, adding that President Weah continues to repeatedly stress the unwavering commitment of the Government of Liberia to continue to do so.

Commenting on the United States Office of Foreign Missions Diplomatic Note of August 2, 2021, which explains the policy of limiting accreditation of individuals assigned to a Foreign Mission in the United States not to exceed Sixty (60) Months, which is Five (5) Years, and the March 16, 2023 Diplomatic Note from the Government of the United States, reminding the Government of Liberia of the aforementioned Five-Year maximum limit, Foreign Minister Kemayah acknowledged that Liberia has not been adhering to this Five-Year maximum limit regulation, and informed the United States Government that the Government of Liberia remains very much committed to fully complying with this Five-Year limit regulation, and all other Host Country regulations and laws, in line with Diplomatic norms and protocols.

United States Assistant Secretary of State Molly Phee and Liberia's Foreign Minister, Amb. Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr. concluded by further acknowledging the strong bond of bilateral traditional relations and friendship subsisting between the Two (2) Countries, Governments and Peoples of the United States and the Republic of Liberia, and renewed their commitments as two Officials to further close ranks and work together for the further strengthening of the already unique strong bonds of the longstanding traditional Partnership and bilateral ties subsisting between the United States and Liberia for the mutual benefits of the Two Countries, Governments and Peoples; and in the interest of Multilateralism and the enhancement of international peace and security.

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