

Liberia, Russia Celebrate 60 Years of Diplomatic Ties

MONROVIA, Liberia, January 14, 2016 (Front Page Africa) — The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. B. Elias Shoniyin, has on behalf of the President, Ellen Johnson, sent a message of renewed diplomatic ties to Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation and the Government and People of Russia as the two countries celebrate 60 years of Diplomatic relations.

In his message through Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Acting Foreign Minister Shoniyin said that, "Today, we recall with great admiration and thanks, the inception of relations between our two countries, advanced by offers of economic and technical aid to Liberia in January 1956, when a Soviet delegation attended the third inauguration of Liberia's former President, H.E. Mr. William V. S. Tubman."

In a Foreign Ministry release, Min. Shoniyin recalled that after that visit, the two countries signed an Agreement on January 11, 1956, that established diplomatic ties, making Liberia the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa with whom Moscow had initiated diplomatic engagements in a bid to implement the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence with other nations.

Meanwhile, the Acting Foreign Minister said that regrettably, relations between both nations became dormant for a while. "However, having envisaged the importance of maintaining close ties, Liberia and Russia jointly signed an Agreement in 1972, for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the aim to contribute to the further development of friendly relations and also insure the benefit of the Russian and Liberian peoples, and in the interest of universal peace and international cooperation."

The Acting Minister also added that Liberia appreciates Russia's contributions to the United Nations Peace keeping efforts, the Steverstal Mining, coupled with Russia's role in the fight against the Ebola virus disease, for which he said he was proud to note. He further stated that Russia's immediate response through contributing US\$60 million is worth commendation.

"What is pleasing to resonate, is that, your government renewed its commitment to our long-standing friendship when the Russian Federation's Ambassador to Liberia presented his Letters of Credence, to President Sirleaf in March 2015," the Acting Minister said.

According to Minister Shoniyin, the government is satisfied to note that their engagement have remained cordial and promising; adding that he is confident that the celebration of 60 years of diplomatic relations will instigate new and prosperous dimension to the enhancement and enrichment of Liberia-Russia relations both at the bilateral and multilateral echelon and pave the way for even stronger engagements in the future.

While congratulating Russia, the Minister further used the occasion to pay tribute to the late Dmitry Safonov, veteran and outstanding diplomat and first resident Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia, who passed on January 3, 2015, adding his imprints remain indelible in the diplomatic history of Liberia and wished for the good health and success of President Vladimir Putin. **(END)**