

# REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

## LIBERIAN CONSULATE - GEORGIA

### HIGH-LEVEL REPORT CARD



For the period January 2018 – November 2018

*Submitted by Cynthia L. Blandford*

*Honorary Consul General Republic of Liberia - GA*

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## LIBERIAN CONSULATE – GEORGIA HIGH-LEVEL REPORT CARD

Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Liberia, Honorable Cynthia Blandford, is celebrating 43-years of promoting Liberia in the areas of Investment and Trade, Healthcare, Agribusiness and Education and has hosted over 40 mission trips to Liberia since 2007. She is collaborating with high-level stakeholders including the Georgia Department of Economic Development and Trade, Georgia Ports Authority and the National Ports Authority of Liberia to increase trade between Georgia and Liberia, the Liberian Airport Authority and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to develop a Cargo Village in Liberia and to increase capacity and training opportunities, the Black Legislative Caucus, to name a few. The Honorary Consul General is the founder of the University Consortium for Liberia where 17 educational institutions are partnering with University of Liberia and the Government of Liberia to improve education in Liberia.

The Honorary Consul General has a Consulate Office located in downtown Atlanta and issues travel visas to Liberia. Ms. Blandford actively engages and interacts with Liberians in the Diaspora and notes that there are over 20,000 Liberians in the State of Georgia. She attends the annual Liberian Association of Metropolitan July 26<sup>th</sup> day events and other activities as well as supports the Liberian Churches and Pastors Association, of which there are approximately 60 in Georgia. Over the next few months, the Honorary Consul General will work along with the Liberian Embassy in D.C. and others on the DED Drawdown to educate and inform Liberians of their options.

The Honorary Consul General has a long history with Liberia beginning in 1974-75 as the first Rotary International Exchange Scholar teaching school in Yekepa, Nimba County and attended the University of Liberia. In 1998, she also attended the Nation Rebuilding and Reconciliation Conference in Liberia during the Taylor Administration.

This High-Level Report will focus on the priority projects and initiatives of the Honorary Consul General where she has demonstrated a proven track record in providing leadership and support that have yielded positive outcomes and deliverables that help to support Liberia's Development Agenda for the period January 2018 – November 2018.

### **Below are the most significant highlights from January 2018 – November 2018:**

- January 2018 **Attended the Inauguration of Liberia's 24<sup>th</sup> President H.E. George Weah** as well as attended the State of the Union Address and other inaugural events and activities.
- February 2018 **Signed a Partnership Agreement between the Liberian Consulate in Georgia and the Consulate in New York in collaboration with Brussels Airlines to provide 20% -30% discounts** for North American travelers going to Liberia, to include Economy Privilege and Business Class upgrades, and other perks, based upon availability.
- March 2018 Worked with the **Carter Center and MAP International to send a container of psycho-tropic drugs** to Liberia to assist with the Carter Center Mental Health Program. Serving on the MAP Board of Directors with a special focus on Liberia.
- March 2018 **Hosted Honorable Wilmont Collins, Mayor of Helena, Montana** at the Liberian Consulate office in collaboration with the Liberian Association of Metropolitan Atlanta President Dr. Somo Hubbard Barsir and leadership team.
- May 2018 Facilitated meetings, site-visit and tour with the **National Port Authority** Sekou Korleh, Executive Director and the Georgia Ports Authority to help strengthen the Sister Port relationships in support of the Sister Port Agreement.
- June 2018 **Hosted the Minister of Health Minister Jallah** facilitating a series of meetings with (1) Dr. David Hefner, Vice President, Office of Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness, Morehouse School of Medicine (2) Dr. Dean Sienko, Vice President, Health Programs the Carter Center and the Mental Health team, and (3)the Liberian Association for Metropolitan Atlanta to discuss the Minister's vision for healthcare in Liberia and to seek support.

- July 2018 Attended the Minister of Foreign Affairs **Honorary Consul General's Retreat** in Monrovia as well as the Independent Day Celebrations.
- August 2018 Established a partnership with the National Black MBAs (NBMBA) and currently **organizing a Business and Education Mission trip to Liberia and Ghana in February 2019.**
- Sept. 2018 **Hosted the Minister of Agriculture for an Agri-Business** Conference at the Georgia Economic Development Center for a briefing on the status of agriculture in Liberia. Meeting with AGCO on farm equipment, fertilizer options for Liberia discussed. Facilitated a meeting with the Minister and Dr. Joe Tomasso, Director of the School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences Auburn State. The day concluded with an interview with Global Atlanta where positive press took place. An off-site meeting was also conducted with GLS Cargo from Liberia in collaboration with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to discuss Liberia's Cargo Village and Sister Airport Agreement.
- October 2018 **Hosted the Deputy Minister of Education Hon. Kesselly** for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual University Consortium for Liberia Scholarship program at Georgia State University where more than 100 were in attendance. The Deputy Minister focused on *Early Childhood Education* and a commitment was made by Brussels Airlines to send educational and medical supplies to Liberia free of charge. UCL President Blandford and the Board of Directors **provided (4) \$1,000 educational scholarship** to students of Liberian descent during the program. Over \$15,000 in educational support has been provided to Liberian students since 2015. The President of Clark Atlanta University, the Consul General for Belgium and Brussels Airlines were also awarded Honorary Liberian Citizenship by the Honorary Consul General Blandford at the program.
- Dec. 2018 **Hosting an Education trip to Liberian in partnership with Clark Atlanta University's** Dean of the College of Business and the Director of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) to establish a YALI program at the University of Liberia. This trip will be in collaboration with the NBMBA site-visit and tour of Liberia mentioned earlier.

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