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***Embassy of the Republic of
Liberia in the United States***,

Thu, Aug 4, 2022

by Al-Jerome A. Chede

Washington DC-August 1, 2022--It was Saturday, July 23, 2022, the weatherman estimated that the temperature in Washington DC would be in the 90's. By 10 a.m., members of the program planning committee were on the grounds of the Embassy putting finishing touches to the program; vendors were setting up stalls; loud music barked from the speakers and the air was filled and smelled of fine and delicate Liberian gastronomies. This was indeed celebrations marking the 175th independence of Liberia.



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Vendors for Food, Music, and Arts dispersed around Embassy Grounds

This year's Independence celebrations coincidentally marked the bicentennial anniversary of the country. The program was held under theme, *Fostering Unity, Protecting our Peace for Development and Prosperity*. The official program was preceded by the playing of the Liberian national anthem and a grand march around the Embassy with flags of the 15 counties making up Liberia.

In remarks, the Liberian Ambassador accredited near Washington DC, His Excellency George S.W. Patten Sr. praised President George M. Weah for signing into law the Bill granting natural born Liberians the fundamental rights to dual citizenship. Ambassador Patten recounted that upon assuming the leadership of the country in 2018, President Weah made a solemn promise to fight for dual citizenship rights for natural born Liberians who took up citizenship in foreign parts. The Ambassador then hailed President Weah for fulfilling his promise despite an initial defeat of the bill in a national referendum few years ago. He challenged natural born Liberians to take advantage of their new rights and work tirelessly in bringing meaningful development to their motherland.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs, Deweh Gray, also extolled the Liberian President for signing the Dual Citizenship Bill and called on all natural born Liberians to seize the moment and contribute to the socio-economic and political vibrancy of Liberia.

In her vote of thanks, Deputy Representative to the UN, Cecelia McGill congratulated Ambassador Patten and his

staff as well as members of the Liberian Community in the DC, Maryland Virginia areas and Friends of the Embassy for staging such a splendid program.

Dignitaries gracing the occasion included the Ambassadors of Sierra Leone, Mali and Zimbabwe. Former Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Liberia and under the banner, Friends of Liberia could not minimize their presence.

Mrs. Donna Charles, a senior staffer from the office of New York Democratic Representative and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Gregory Weldon Meeks as well as Brian Neubert, Director for West Africa Affairs at the U.S. State Department were in attendance to wish Liberia well.

Music was provided by Alvin Hoff and DJ thunder while Liberian musical Super Star Benji Cavalli thrilled the gathering with several of his smashing hit songs.

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