

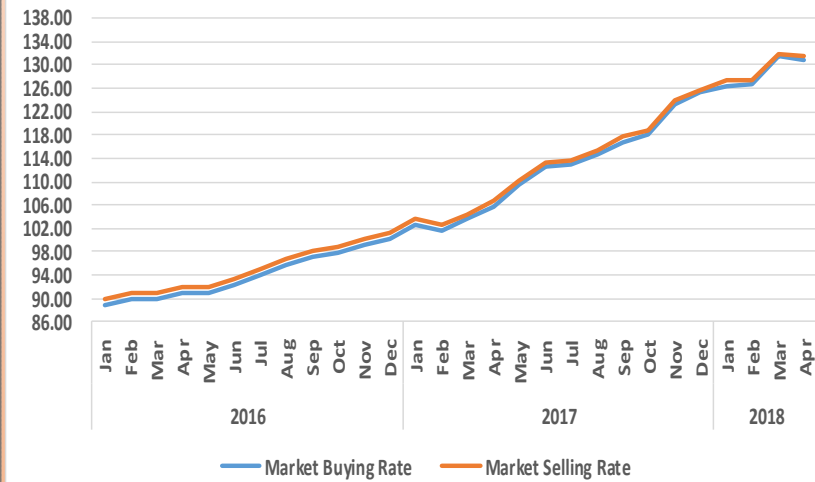


CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA (CBL)

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**Table 2: Performances of End-of-Period WAMZ
Exchange Rates against the US Dollar**

Currency	Apr -17	Mar-18	Apr-18	Appr (-)/Depr (+)	
				MoM	YoY
GHC	4.19	4.40	4.41	0.06	5.25
GMD	45.33	46.76	48.17	3.03	6.27
GNF	9,135.97	8,995.13	9,002.81	0.09	-1.46
LRD	106.50	131.64	131.52	-0.10	23.50
NGN	305.40	305.15	305.15	0.00	-0.08
SLL	7,271.15	7,546.79	7,661.82	1.52	5.37

Sources: Central Banks of Liberia and WAMA: www.amao-wama.org/

LRD—Liberian Dollar
GHC—Ghanaian Cedi
GMD—Gambian Dalasi
GNF—Guinean Franc
NGN—Nigerian Naira
SLL—Sierra Leonean Leone
USD—US Dollar

	Jan-18	Feb - 18	Mar - 18	Apr - 18
External Trade (Volume) – cont'd	(Metric Tons)			
- Petroleum Products	5,049	4,685	2,807.0	6,472±
- Cocoa Beans	0.0	102,000	21,250.0	0.0
- Palm Oil	645.0	0	21,661.0	2,215
10 Inflation	(In percent)			
Overall (Year-on-year) Rate of Inflation	15.4	17.8	19.5	21.4
a. Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages Inflation	8.0	11.6	17.4	20.1
- Domestic Food Inflation	7.3	11.7	19.8	21.3
- Imported Food Inflation	7.0	11.1	15.7	19.2
b. Transport Inflation	26.8	30.9	30.8	30.3
c. Imported Fuels Inflation	35.8	31.3	28.1	28.0
Overall (Month-on-Month) Rate of Inflation	2.4	0.6	2.1	1.4
Core Inflation	(In percent)			
Inflation excluding Food & Non-alcoholic Beverages	20.0	21.5	20.7	22.1
Inflation excluding Imported Food	17.5	19.7	20.6	21.9
Inflation excluding Domestic Food	8.2	17.5	18.3	20.4
Inflation excluding Food and Transport	18.9	20.0	19.1	20.8
Production	(Metric Tons, Carats and Ounces)			
Iron Ore	0	0	469,047	35,000
Gold	32,337	21,058	16,109	17,301
Diamond	2,745	11,183	10,549	13,473
Rubber	3,166	3,489	5,792	4,467
Cement	23,380	20,124	37,980	27,161±
Beverages	(In Litres)			
<i>Alcoholic</i>	964,540	1,213,682	497,147	964,591
<i>Non-Alcoholic</i>	801,996	1,120,441	931,039	1,042,549
11 Int'l Commodity Prices	US\$/Unit			
Iron Ore (US\$/MT)	76.3	77.5	70.4	65.8
Rubber (US\$/MT)	1,720.0	1,720.0	1,760.0	1,730.0
Crude Oil (US\$/Barrel)/1	66.2	63.5	64.7	68.8
Rice (US\$/MT)	442.0	425.0	430.0	451.0
Cocoa Beans (US\$/MT)	1,950.0	2,120.0	2,500	2,620.0
Palm Oil	679.3	663.0	681.0	666.0

* US\$ converted to L\$ ^With liquidity Effect

** Other Deposits Include Official and Manager Checks

***The Minimum Capital Adequacy Ratio is 10%

****The Required Minimum Liquidity Ratio is 15%

‡Reserves exclude ECF borrowing from the IMF

± Provisional, Preliminary, Estimate

‡Revised

‡Not Available (NA)

/1 Average Monthly prices of Dated Brent, West Texas Intermediate & Dubai Fateh

REAL SECTOR & PRICE DEVELOPMENTS

Production of Key Commodities

Outputs of key commodities in April, 2018 was characterized by mixed movements. Cement output slumped by 28.5 percent, to an estimated 27,161 metric tons, compared with production in March, 2018, mainly as a result of decreased in construction activities due to the rainy season. Beverages production surged by 40.5 percent to 2.0 million liters in April, 2018 from 1.4 million liters produced in the previous month, largely due to the increased in the production of alcoholic beverages as a result of the repair of the production plant for stout. Rubber output decreased by 22.9 percent, to 4,467 metric tons, from 5,792 metric tons produced during the previous month. The decrease was attributed to the decline in the price on the world market. Iron ore production slumped by 92.5 percent to 35,000 metric ton in April compared with March, occasioned by price decline in global market. Gold output increased by 7.4 percent to 17,301 ounces, from 16,109 ounces produced in the previous month. The increased in gold production was ascribed to the slight increase in price on the global market. Diamond production during the review period increased to 13,473 carats, from 10,549 carats during the preceding month as a result of increase in price on the global market.

Consumer Prices

Inflation on a year-on-year basis increased by 9.9 percentage points to 21.4 percent at end-April 2018, up from 11.5 percent at end-April 2017, attributed to the increases in all major subgroups, primarily, as the result of the depreciation of the Liberian Dollar against United States Dollar.

On a month on month basis, the rate of inflation decreased by 0.7 percentage points to 1.4 percent from 2.1 percent reported during the previous month. The decrease in monthly inflation rate was mainly as a result of decline in the Transportation subgroup.

MONETARY DEVELOPMENTS

Monetary Policy Stance

The monetary policy stance of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) for the month of April, 2018 remains anchored on price stability through broad exchange rate stability. In pursuit of this objective, the CBL utilized its invention in the Fx market and the T-bill as the readily available tools to implement its monetary policy operations. In the near future, the CBL intends to create a standing deposit and credit facilities to complement its limited policy instruments.

Monetary Aggregates and Credit

Broad money supply (M2), at end-April, 2018, grew by 0.6 percent to L\$87,510.3 million, over March, 2018. The expansion was mainly triggered by 4.7 percent expansion in demand deposits. Matched against the figure recorded a year ago, broad money grew by 28.6 percent mainly on account of 28.0 percent, and 24.8 percent increases in time & saving deposits and demand deposits, respectively.

On the assets side, net foreign assets (NFA) and net domestic assets (NDA) at end-April, 2018 trended in opposite direction compared with both the preceding month and the same period a year ago. NFA fell by 11.3 percent month-on-month and 1.8 percent year-on-year. The monthly decline of NFA was mainly triggered by 21.5 percent contraction in foreign assets of the CBL, while the annual decline was on account of 12.1 percent slowdown in the assets of banking institutions. NDA grew monthly by 5.3 percent and 43.0 percent annually. The monthly expansion was mainly occasioned by growth of 11.5 percent in net credit to government while the yearly expansion was on account of increases in net credit to government and credit to the private sector including credit to NBFIs.

The US dollar share of commercial bank loans to private sector at end-April, 2018 dropped by 1.0 percent to US\$383.5 million while the Liberian dollars component rose by 2.1 percent to L\$4,152.9 million. Year-on-year comparison reveals that the US dollar share slowdown by 1.7 percent while the Liberian dollar share expanded by 31.0 percent, both motivated mainly by declines in loans to the Services, Trade and “other” sectors (for US\$ credit) as well as increases in loans to the Services, manufacturing, construction, trade and agriculture sectors (for L\$ credit).

Exchange Rate

At end-April, 2018, the average exchange rate of the Liberian dollar vis-à-vis the US dollar depreciated marginally by 0.02 percent to L\$131.25/US\$1.00. The end-of-period (EOP) exchange rate for the same period appreciated by 0.1 percent to L\$131.52/US\$1.00. Year-on-year comparison showed that the average exchange rate depreciated by 23.6 percent and the EOP rate, by 23.5 percent. The weakness of the domestic currency continues to occur as a result of the high demand for US dollar to facilitate imports coupled with weak nature of the economy's real sector.

	Jan-18	Feb - 18	Mar - 18	Apr - 18
Non-performing Loans (% change)	-3.3	6.7	12.3	-6.7
Returns on Assets (ROA)	0.17	0.24	0.12	0.5
Returns on Equity (ROE)	1.02	1.48	0.77	2.9
Liquidity Ratio****	47.7	47.5	47.6	42.7
7 Fiscal Operations				
7a Revenue, Expenditure & Debt	(Millions of US\$)			
Actual Revenue & Grants	27.3	29.3	60.0	42.9
Projected Revenue & Grants	37.4	61.1	27.9	61.5
Expenditure	25.8	39.5	48.0	39.5
Public Debt Stock	881.7	904.4	914.9	930.7
Domestic	266.1	265.9	265.8	265.9
External	615.6	638.1	649.0	664.8
7b Treasury Securities	(Millions of L\$)			
T- Bills Issued	-62.7	0.0	-63.4	-63.4
T- Bills Redeemed	58.9	30.0	62.8	62.8
Net GoL Treasury Bills Operations^	-3.8	30.0	0.6	0.6
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate_T Bills	3.26	0.0	2.91	2.91
Bond Issued (2 yrs.) amount in Billion				
T- Bond Issued	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
T- Bond Settled	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net GoL Treasury Bond Operations^	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate_T Bond	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
8 External Trade (Value)	(Millions of US\$)			
8a Exports/1	43.7	33.8	50.1	29.9
- O/w Iron Ore	0.0	0.0	13.4	1.5
- O/w Rubber	8.6	6.5	12.0	5.8
- O/w Mineral	34.4	26.5	19.5	21.8
-o/w Cocoa Bean	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0
-o/w Palm Oil	0.4	0.0	0.7	0.0
8b Imports (F.O.B)/1	90.6	94.0	72.2	68.9
Minerals, Fuel, Lubricants	22.3	13.5	7.6	14.7
-O/w Petroleum Products	10.9	9.8	5.3	10.9
Food and Live Animals (including Animal and vegetable oil)	15.9	40.9	27.0	13.7
-O/w Commercial Rice	1.2	4.9	18.5	17.5
-O/w Non-commercial Rice	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.4
Machinery & Transport Equipment	21.6	17.3	21.9	21.6
Import (C.I.F)	97.9	103.4	80.2	78.9
Trade Balance	-46.9	-60.2	-22.1	-39.0
9 External Trade (Volume)	(Metric Tons)			
- Rubber	3,165.24	3,488.90	5,792.48	4,467
-Iron Ore	0.0	0.0	469,047.5	35,000±
-Commercial Rice	151,801	147,669	138,518	145,996±
-Non-commercial Rice	1,302	1,261	1,188	1,250±

/1 Trade data now sourced from Customs (LRA) with larger coverage than BIVAC.

Table 1: Fact Sheet

	Jan-18	Feb - 18	Mar-18	Apr-18
1 Monetary	<i>(Millions of US\$)</i>			
CBL Net Foreign Exchange Reserves Position (Including SDRs) [†]	153.3	159.1	188.1	130.9
CBL Gross Foreign Reserves (excluding SDRs)	235.0	231.4	252.3	224.8
Liberian Dollars in Circulation	15,775.6	15,849.2	16,692.6	16,900.6
Money Supply (M1) in L\$ only	20,835.5	21,193.2	22,572.7	22,189.5
Broad money (M2) in L\$ only	27,462.3	28,126.8	30,158.1	29,433.0
Broad money (M2) in both L\$ and US\$*	78,900.4	85,049.2	87,003.7	87,510.3
	<i>(In percent)</i>			
Liberian Dollar share of Broad Money	34.8	33.1	34.7	33.6
Interest Rates				
- Lending rate	13.3	13.3	13.1	13.1
-Average Deposit rates				
-Savings	2.23	2.23	2.23	2.16
-Time	3.64	3.75	3.64	3.64
	<i>(In Millions of Currencies)</i>			
Commercial banks loans to private sector - US\$	382.9	391.6	387.4	383.5
Commercial banks loans to private sector - L\$	4,050.9	4,064.6	4,069.0	4,152.9
- Demand Deposits of commercial banks				
Demand deposits - US\$	257.7	287.7	264.3	279.3
Demand deposits - L\$	6,137.2	6,405.6	6,943.5	6,757.3
- Time & Savings Deposits of commercial banks				
Time & savings deposits - US\$	147.7	159.1	168.0	162.9
Time & savings deposits - L\$	6,569.9	6,802.5	7,524.7	7,186.3
- Other Deposits**				
Actual US\$ component of other deposits	0.2	1.2	1.3	0.7
Liberian \$ component of other deposits	56.9	131.1	60.7	57.2
2 CBL's Foreign Exchange Auction	<i>(Millions of US\$)</i>			
US Dollar Amount Sold	4.0	2.0	1.9	4.0
Total Subscription	3.8	2.2	2.0	3.4
Over(+)- / Under(-) Subscription	-0.3	0.2	0.1	-0.6
3 CBL Bills Auction	<i>(Millions of L\$)</i>			
Bill Issued	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bill Redeemed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
4 Personal Remittances	<i>(Millions of US\$)</i>			
Inflows	41.1	40.1	49.6	42.1
Outflows	18.5	24.1	31.9	31.0
Net flows	22.6	16.0	17.6	11.1
5 Exchange Rate	<i>(USD/LD)</i>			
End of Period	121.5	130.2	131.6	131.5
Period Average	126.9	127.1	131.1	131.2
6 Financial Soundness Indicators (FSI)	<i>(In percent)</i>			
Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)***	26.6	35.14	35.14	34.9
Non-performing Loans to Total Loans	15.6	15.5	17.0	16.3

In the WAMZ, the EOP rate for four currencies in the Zone depreciated, one appreciated and one stabilized at end-April, 2018. The Gambia Dalasi, the Sierra Leonean Leone, the Guinean Franc and the Ghana Cedis depreciated by 3.03 percent, 1.52 percent, 0.09 percent and 0.06 percent, respectively. The Liberian dollar marginally appreciated by 0.1 percent while the Nigerian Naira stabilized. Year-on-year movements of currencies in the WAMZ showed that the Guinean Franc and the Nigerian Naira appreciated by 1.46 percent and 0.08 percent, respectively, while all other currencies in the zone experienced depreciation (see Table 2).

Financial Market Developments

During the month ended April, 2018, net GoL T-bill operations amounted to a Liberia dollar withdrawal of L\$2.9 million. This implies that the CBL, on behalf of the government, issued L\$65.6 million and redeemed L\$62.7 million in the reporting month. The discount rate in April, 2018 on GoL T-bill issued was 2.83 percent, suggesting a 11 basis points lower than the yield recorded a month ago.

Banking Sector Developments

Activities in the banking industry at end-April, 2018 continued to be robust as revealed by key macro-prudential indicators. Capital adequacy and liquidity ratios remained far beyond the minimum requirements of 10.0 percent and 15.0 percent, respectively. Provisional banking sector data at end-April, 2018 revealed a liquidity ratio of 42.7 percent, compared with 47.6 percent reported at end-March, 2018. The Sector's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) preliminarily settle at 34.9 percent compared with preceding month. Non-performing loans ratio declined by 70 basis points to 16.3 percent compared with end-March, 2018 while the absolute value of non-performing loan narrow down by 6.7 percent at end-April, 2018

FISCAL DEVELOPMENTS

Revenue (including Grants) & Expenditures

An estimated fiscal outturn for the month of April, 2018 resulted in a surplus of US\$3.4 million down from a surplus of US\$24.1 million in the previous month. The slowdown in the surplus level was on account of an increase of US\$3.6 million in total public expenditure during the review month.

Tax and non-tax revenue & grants respectively accounted for 58.0 percent and 13.6 percent of total revenue and grants during the month under review. Actual revenue and grants reduced below budgetary projections by US\$18.6 million during the month. Recurrent and capital expenditure accounted for 94.0 percent and 6.6 percent of total public expenditure, respectively, for the month of April, 2018.

Liberia's public debt stock at end-April, 2018 amounted to US\$930.7 million, increasing by US\$15.8 million (1.7 percent) against the stock of US\$914.9 million at end-Mar, 2018. Domestic and external debt stocks constituted 28.6 percent and 71.4 percent of Liberia's total public debt stock at end-April, 2018, respectively.

EXTERNAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

Merchandise Trade

Merchandise trade balance at end-April, 2018 recorded a deficit of US\$39.0 million, as a result of a sharp decline in export receipt that outweighed the fall in payments for imports.

Exports

Export earnings during the month showed a decline below the previous month. Earnings fell by 40.3 percent to US\$29.9 million, from US\$50.1 million at end-March, 2018 mainly driven by rise in all major exports categories, except mineral. Receipt from rubber and iron ore export fell by 5.2 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively during the month under review.

Imports (FOB)

Preliminary statistics on import payments showed that at end-April, 2018, payments declined by 4.6 percent to US\$68.9 million. The major contributing factor to the decline was Food and Live Animals (including animals and vegetable oil) which fell by nearly US\$13.9 million when compared with March, 2018.

Global Commodity Price Review

Average global commodity price index, showed a downward trend. It fell by an estimated 2.1 percentage points during the month ended April, 2018 to 111.7 percent. The decrease in average global commodity price index was largely a result of decline in the price of agriculture raw materials (especially rubber) and metal (mainly iron ore).

Iron ore

The price of iron ore on the international market fell for the second consecutive month in 2018. The price declined by 6.5 percent to US\$65.8 per metric ton at end-April, 2018, from US\$70.4 per metric ton at the end of the previous month due partly to U.S Government threat of imposing punitive import tariffs on China and EU steel exports to the U.S in the face of increased demand from manufacturing plants.

Rubber (natural)

The global price of natural rubber for the first time in 2018 declined by US\$30.00 to US\$1730.0 at end-April, 2018 below the preceding month. The fall was due to unexpected increase in supply from other rubber producing countries.

Petroleum (Crude Oil)

The international price of petroleum by 6.3 percent for the second time in 2018 to US\$68.8 per barrel at end-April 2018, as a result of supply disruption owing to expected cut off of Iran oil supply from the global oil market.

Food (Rice)

Global food price remained relatively stable during the month, only rising marginally by 0.2 percent at end-April 2018, due to the prices of sugar, vegetable oil and meat. Consistent with increase in the price of cereal, the price of rice on the global market increased following second round of public purchases of rice by Indonesia, couple with the launch of an import regulation by the Philippines.

Palm Oil

International price of crude palm oil showed a decline after a pickup in the previous quarter. The price of crude palm oil fell by 2.2 percent to US\$666.0 per metric ton in April 2018, on account of slowing demand growth and an expected seasonal production gains in Southeast Asia.

Gross Foreign Reserves

The Central Bank of Liberia's (CBL) gross foreign exchange reserve position at end-April 2018 saw a decline after an increase in the previous month. Gross foreign reserve fell by 10.9 percent to US\$224.8, from US\$252.3 at end of the preceding month due to declines in both balances with banks abroad and US dollar Notes & Coins.

Crude oil price is the average of the three global oil price benchmarks: Dated Brent, West Texas Intermediate and Dubai Fateh.