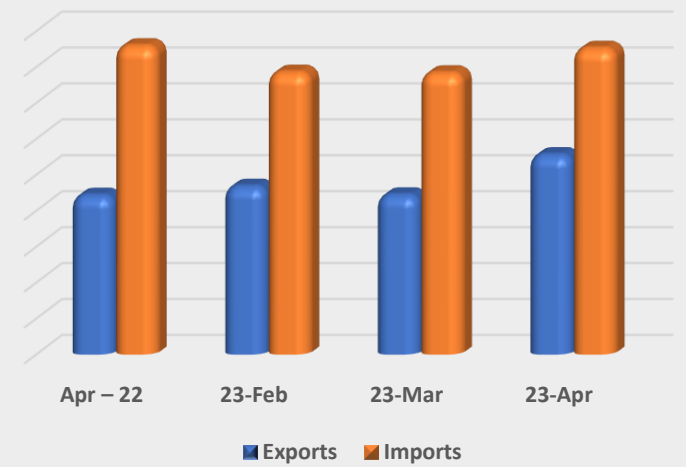


**MONTHLY  
ECONOMIC  
REVIEW**

**APRIL 2023  
VOLUME 9 No. 4**



**CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA**



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**Table 8: Developments in Global Commodity Prices**

GLOBAL PRICE	Apr - 22	Feb - 23	Mar - 23	Apr - 23	Percent Change	
					MoM	YoY
<b>(Commodity price per Unit of Measure)</b>						
Iron ore (US\$/MT)	151.25	127.60	128.37	117.39	(8.55)	(22.39)
Gold (US\$/Oz)	1,936.86	1,854.54	1,912.73	1,999.77	4.55	3.25
Rubber (US\$/MT)	2,090.00	1,620.00	1,580.00	1,540.00	(2.53)	(26.32)
Cocoa Beans (US\$/MT)	2,460.00	2,650.00	2,750.00	2,880.00	4.73	17.07
Palm oil (US\$/MT)	1,682.74	949.98	972.06	1,005.24	3.41	(40.26)
Crude oil (US\$/BBL)	103.41	80.25	76.47	82.46	7.83	(20.26)
Food Price Index (FAO) <sup>1</sup>	158.30	129.70	126.90	127.70	0.63	(19.33)
Rice_5% broken (US\$/MT)	431.00	492.00	476.00	501.00	5.25	16.24
Sugar (US\$/MT)	430.00	450.00	450.00	530.00	17.78	23.26
Commodity Price Index No <sup>2</sup>	226.49	173.85	167.44	171.92	2.68	(24.09)

*1/Commodity Food Price Index includes Cereal, Vegetable Oils, Meat, Seafood, Sugar, Bananas, and Oranges Price Indices<sup>2</sup>/ Commodity Price Index includes both Fuel and Non-Fuel Price Indices*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Monthly Economic Review (MER) is published by the Research, Policy, and Planning Department (RPPD) of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL). It is a regular publication that provides a snapshot of economic developments in key sectors (Real, Monetary, Fiscal and External) of the Liberian economy. The MER also highlights the Monetary Policy Stance of the CBL and provides a synopsis of exchange rate developments in the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ).

This Edition represents Volume 9 Number 4.

## 2.0 OVERVIEW

Except for rubber output, production statistics of commodities such as iron ore, gold, diamond, cement, and beverages showed weak performance in April 2023 relative to the previous month. The increase in rubber output was mainly explained by inventory built-up especially from small farm holders, while the decline in minerals' outputs reflected slowdown in mining activities due to unfavorable weather condition. For the manufacturing subsector, developments were on account of decrease in retail sales which reflected reduced households' consumption of beverages. Similarly, the weak performance in cement production was due to inventory built-up underpinned by slowdown in construction-related activities.

In April 2023, headline inflation increased to 9.4 percent, from 6.1 percent in March 2023, largely driven by increase in the prices of food & non-alcoholic beverages, clothing & footwear, furnishings, household equipment & routine household maintenance, transport, communication, recreation & culture, and miscellaneous goods & services related items in the CPI basket.

The Central Bank of Liberia's (CBL) monetary policy stance continues to be anchored on price stability with emphasis on the management of Liberian dollar liquidity. As part of the CBL's monetary policy operations, the Bank issued bills at tenors of two-week, one-month, and three-month at the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) of 15.0 percent per annum.

Broad money (M2) supply grew by 1.3 percent to L\$167.16 billion at end-April 2023 relative to the amount reported at end-March 2023. On the liability side, the growth was mainly triggered by increases in currency outside banks, and demand deposits, while on the asset side, it was partly due to growth in net credit to private sector. Currency in circulation grew to L\$26.45 billion at end-April 2023, driven by increase in currency outside banks.

## 7.7 Palm Oil

The price of palm oil rose by 3.4 percent to US\$1,005.24 per metric ton, from US\$972.06 per metric ton in March 2023, mainly due to decline in palm stock in Malaysia and Indonesia. Compared to the corresponding month in 2022, the price of palm oil fell by 40.3 percent, from US\$1,682.74 per metric ton.

## 7.8 Rice

The price for rice grew by 5.3 percent to US\$501.00 per metric ton in April 2023, from US\$4476.00 per metric ton in March 2023, largely due to higher international quotations and supply conditions from Ukraine. Annualized comparison showed that the price of the commodity increased by 16.2 percent, from US\$431.00 per metric ton in April 2022.

## 7.9 Cocoa Beans

Cocoa beans price increased by 4.7 percent to US\$2,880.00, from US\$2,750.00 per metric ton in March 2023, on account of lower production volumes in Cote d'Ivoire and increase in global demand. Compared to April 2022, the price of cocoa beans increased by 17.1 percent from US\$2,460.00 per metric ton.

## 7.10 Commodity Outlook

The overall global commodity prices outlook for the month of May 2023 showed downward trends. The price indices for both energy commodity (mainly crude oil, coal, etc.) and non-energy commodities including base metals and minerals (iron ore) are projected to decrease in May 2023. The prices for agricultural products (beverages and food), raw materials (timber, and other raw materials), and fertilizers are also expected to decline in May 2023.

## 7.2 Gold

The price of gold increased by 4.6 percent to US\$1,999.77 per ounce in April 2023, from US\$1,912.73 per ounce in the previous month, led by increase in global demand for the commodity. Year-on-year comparison showed that the price of the commodity increased by 3.3 percent, from US\$1,936.86 recorded in April 2022.

## 7.3 Crude Oil (Petroleum) price

Petroleum price grew by 7.8 percent to US\$ 82.46 per barrel in April 2023 relative to the preceding month. This development was driven by cut in production by members of OPEC, mainly Saudi Arabia during the review month. When compared to April 2022, the price of petroleum declined by 20.3 percent from US\$103.41 per barrel.

## 7.4 Rubber

Rubber price plummeted by 2.5 percent to US\$1,540.00 per metric ton during the review month, from the US\$1,580.00 per metric ton recorded in March 2023, on account of the expectation of elevated global inflation particularly in the US economy, and a slump in the demand for natural rubber in China. Year-on-year comparison showed that rubber price fell by 26.3 percent from US\$2,090.00 per metric ton in April 2022.

## 7.5 Food Price (FAO)

FAO food price index (FFPI) increased by 0.6 percent to US\$127.70 in April 2023, from US\$126.90 in March 2023. The increase was caused by higher international quotations for sugar, meat, and rice.

## 7.6 Sugar

The price of sugar surged to US\$530.00 per metric ton, from US\$450.00 in the previous month. Annual comparison revealed that the price of the commodity increased by 23.3 percent from US\$430.00 per metric ton in April 2022.

The financial soundness indicators of the Liberian banking system remained favorable during the review period as commercial banks were largely in compliance with most of the regulatory requirements of the CBL. The industry liquidity ratio decreased by 2.51 percentage points to 42.04 percent, while the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) declined by 4.46 percentage points to 22.29 percent at end-April 2023, but they remained above their respective minimum regulatory requirements during the review period. However, Return on Assets (ROA) increased by 0.11 percentage points to 0.59 percent, and Return on Equity (ROE) grew by 0.66 percentage points to 4.29 percent at end-April 2023, while the ratio of non-performing loans to total loans also grew by 1.75 percentage points to 18.11 percent during the review month.

The Government of Liberia's (GoL) fiscal operations in April 2023 reported an increased deficit in the overall balance to 0.2 percent of GDP, from 0.1 percent of GDP in the preceding month, mainly on account of growth in government expenditure which outweighed the increase in total revenue. The total public debt rose to 48.5 percent of GDP at end-April 2023 relative to the debt stock reported at end-March 2023 due to 0.8 percent increase in external debt and an 8.7 percent rise in domestic debt.

In the external sector, the merchandise trade deficit reduced by 12.8 percent to 1.4 percent of GDP in April 2023 due to growth in exports, while total merchandise trade increased by 14.7 percent to 6.5 percent of GDP against the previous month, on account of increase both import payments and export receipts.

Gross International Reserves (GIR) decreased by 1.9 percent to US\$570.6 million (13.1 percent of GDP) at end-April 2023 relative to the amount reported in the previous month, primarily occasioned by depreciation in Special Drawing Right (SDRs) Holdings. Similarly, the months of import cover fell to 3.0 months, from 3.2 months in March 2023.

Net personal remittances inflows (including remittances terminated through mobile wallet) declined by 6.2 percent to 1.5 percent of GDP in April 2023 compared to the amount recorded in the previous month, driven by decrease in inward remittances. The Liberian dollar depreciated against the US dollar on both average and end-period basis in April 2023 by 1.3 percent and 1.7 percent to L\$163.21/US\$1.00 and L\$165.13/US\$1.00, respectively. This development was driven by the high demand for foreign exchange to facilitate imports during the review month.

### 3.0 REAL SECTOR & PRICE DEVELOPMENTS

#### 3.1 Production Analyses of Key Commodities

Production statistics of key commodities mostly revealed weak performance in April 2023 compared to the preceding month. Except for rubber output that recorded growth, other commodities including iron ore, gold, diamond, cement, and beverages declined during the month under review relative to the previous month. Compared to the corresponding period in 2022, outputs of gold and diamond increased while rubber, iron ore, cement, and beverages outputs fell.

In the mining subsector, outputs of iron ore, gold, and diamond fell by 8.6, 7.4 and 57.0 percent to 425,000 metric tons, 36,885 ounces and 4,449 carats, respectively, in April 2023 relative to the preceding month. The decline in the productions of these minerals reflected slowdown in mining activities due to unfavorable weather condition. However, when compare with the corresponding period in 2022, gold and diamond outputs grew, while iron ore production moderated.

Developments in the manufacturing subsector showed that beverages (alcoholic and nonalcoholic) production fell by 47.4 percent to 888,346 liters, from the 1,690,250 liters reported during the previous month. This development was on account of inventory built-up coupled with decline in retail sales due to reduction in households' consumption of beverages. Of the total production during the month, alcoholic beverages accounted for 83.9 percent while non-alcoholic beverages constituted 16.1 percent. Cement output declined by 53.7 percent to an estimated 31,558 metric tons, from the 68,133 metric tons produced in the previous month. The weak performance was due to inventory built-up in addition to slowdown in construction-related activities.

Relative to the agriculture subsector, rubber output rose by 62.8 percent to 5,290 metric tons, from the 3,250 metric tons recorded in the previous month. The increase in rubber output was mainly explained by inventory built-up especially from small farm holders.

#### 3.2 Consumer Prices

The overall consumer prices index (CPI) rose to 9.4 percent in April 2023, from 6.1 percent in March 2023. This development was mainly explained by increase in the prices of food & non-alcoholic beverages, clothing & footwear, furnishings, household equipment & routine household maintenance, transport, communication, recreation & culture, and miscellaneous goods & services related items in the CPI basket.

**Table 7: Exchange Rate Developments in Liberia and the WAMZ Countries**

Currency	Apr.-22	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr.-23	Appr (+)/Depr (-)	
					MoM	YoY
<b>Exchange Rate</b>	<b>LD/USD</b>				<b>Percent change</b>	
	<b>Currency per USD</b>					
GHC	7.11	10.84	11.01	10.95	0.6	(35.0)
GMD	54.09	61.24	61.07	60.71	0.6	(10.9)
GNF	8,750.29	8,531.12	8,528.85	8,505.43	0.3	2.9
LRD	152.39	157.54	161.07	163.21	(1.3)	(6.6)
NGN	415.40	460.44	460.45	460.42	0.0	(9.8)
SLL	12.23	19.75	20.55	21.72	(5.4)	(43.7)
<b>Avg Period</b>						
LRD	151.39	158.89	162.28	165.13	(1.7)	(5.9)

Source: CBL, WAMA: [www.amao-wama.org/](http://www.amao-wama.org/)  
 GHC - Ghanaian cedi; LD - Liberian dollar; GMD - Gambian dalasi; GNF - Guinean franc; NGN - Nigerian naira; SLL—Sierra Leonean leone; USD – United States dollar

### 7.0 GLOBAL COMMODITY PRICE DEVELOPMENTS

The commodity price index of fuel & non-fuel commodities generally increased in April 2023 relative to the preceding month. FAO food commodity price index rose by 1.9 percent while the fuel & non-fuel commodity price index increased by 2.6 percent during the review month.

#### 7.1 Iron Ore

The price of iron ore decreased by 8.6 percent to US\$117.39 per metric ton in April 2023, from US\$128.37 per metric ton in March 2023. The decline in the price of the commodity was due to reduced global demand largely driven by weak steel demand in China. Year-on-year comparison indicated that the price fell by 22.4 percent, from US\$151.25 per metric ton recorded in April 2022.

### 6.3 Personal Remittances

Personal remittance inflows (net), including remittances terminated through mobile wallet, decreased by 6.2 percent to US\$63.2 million (1.5 percent of GDP) in April 2023, compared to the US\$67.4 million (1.6 percent of GDP) recorded in March 2023. This development was driven by a 4.6 percent decline in remittance inflows coupled with 15.7 percent increase in outflows. Inflows and outflows of remittances amounted to US\$69.6 million and US\$6.4 million, from the US\$72.9 million and US\$5.5 million reported, respectively, in the preceding month.

### 6.4 Gross International Reserves

Gross International Reserves (GIR) fell by 1.9 percent to US\$570.6 million (13.1 percent of GDP) at end-April 2023, from the US\$581.7 million (13.4 percent of GDP) recorded at end-March 2023. This development was mainly driven by depreciation in Special Drawing Right (SDRs) Holdings. Similarly, the months of import cover reduced to 3.0 months from 3.2 months, on account of growth in payments for imports coupled with decline in GIR. The recorded import cover was sufficient to achieve the ECOWAS minimum regional threshold of 3 months (Table 6).

### 6.5 Exchange Rate Developments

On end of period basis, the Liberian dollar depreciated against the United States dollar by 1.7 percent to L\$165.13/US\$1.00 in April 2023 relative to the L\$162.28/US\$1.00 exchange rate reported at end-March 2023. The depreciation was mainly due to rise in demand for foreign exchange to facilitate payments for imports during the review month.

Exchange rate developments in the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) relative to member states' currencies were mixed during the review month. On average, four of the currencies (the dalasi, Guinean franc, cedi, and naira) in the Zone appreciated against the US dollar, while the Liberian dollar and Sierra Leonean leone depreciated against the US dollar in April 2023. The Gambia dalasi, Ghanaian cedi, Guinean franc, and Nigerian naira appreciated against the US dollar by 0.6 percent, 0.6 percent, 0.3 percent, and 0.0 percent, respectively. However, the Sierra Leonean leone and Liberian dollar depreciated against the US dollar by 5.4 percent 1.3 percent, respectively, during the review month.

Matched with the corresponding period in 2022, all currencies in the WAMZ depreciated (on average) against the US dollar except the Guinean franc. The leone, cedi, dalasi, naira, and the Liberian dollar depreciated by 43.7 percent, 35.0 percent, 10.9 percent, 9.8 percent, and 6.6 percent respectively, while the Guinean franc appreciated against the US dollar by 2.9 percent in April 2023.

However, on a month-on-month basis, inflation fell by 1.5 percentage points to 0.4 percent, from 1.1 percent in the previous month. This inflationary adjustment largely reflected declines in the prices of food & non-alcoholic beverages, clothing & footwear, housing, water, electricity, gas & other fuels, furnishings, household equipment & routine household maintenance, and health subgroups in the CPI basket.

Similarly, core inflation<sup>1</sup> increased by 0.3 percentage point to 10.2 percent in April 2023, from 9.9 percent recorded in the preceding month. The rise was largely induced by increase in the prices of non-food-related and non-transport-related items influenced by exchange rate depreciation.

**Table 1: Production and Price Statistics**

Production	Apr.-2022	Feb.-2023	Mar.-2023	Apr.-2023
	<i>(In Metric ton, Ounce, Carat and Liter)</i>			
Iron Ore (Metric ton)	450,000	420,000	465,000	425,000
Gold (Ounces)	25,700	32,028	39,823	36,885
Diamond (Carat)	1,229	11,574	10,349	4,449
Rubber (Metric ton)	7,160	4,258	3,250	5,290
Cement (Metric ton)	64,306	53,156	68,133	31,558
Total Beverages (liter)	1,475,735	1,365,447	1,690,250	888,346
Alcoholic	1,310,199	1,218,585	1,445,577	745,628
Non-Alcoholic	165,536	146,853	244,673	142,718
<b>Inflation</b>	<i>(In percent)</i>			
<b>Overall (Y-o-Y) Rate of Inflation</b>	<b>6.26</b>	<b>8.27</b>	<b>6.10</b>	<b>9.43</b>
a. Food and Non-alcoholic Beverage Inflation	(2.39)	(3.27)	(5.38)	1.38
- Domestic Food Inflation	(2.74)	(8.89)	(15.01)	(5.94)
- Imported Food Inflation	(2.04)	1.97	3.60	7.24
b. Transport Inflation	12.95	54.04	22.89	34.19
c. Imported Fuels Inflation	34.62	30.51	(9.47)	(3.22)
<b>Overall (M-o-M) Rate of Inflation</b>	<b>(3.41)</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>(0.39)</b>
<b>Core Inflation</b>				
Inflation excluding Food & NAB <sup>1</sup>	10.57	13.70	11.54	12.97
Inflation excluding Imported Food	8.09	9.51	6.53	9.79
Inflation excluding Domestic Food	8.84	11.44	9.63	11.34
<b>Inflation excluding Food and Transport</b>	<b>10.27</b>	<b>9.19</b>	<b>9.94</b>	<b>10.22</b>
<b>Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP)<sup>2</sup></b>				
Nominal (NGDP) (in millions US\$)	3,974.0	4,332.0	4,332.0	4,332.00
RGDP growth (in percent)	4.8	4.6*	4.6*	4.6

Sources: AML, MLME, FSL, CEMENCO, LCCBC, RITCO, NICOM, MB, CEMENCO, CBL & LISGIS.

<sup>1</sup> Non-alcoholic beverages

<sup>2</sup> GDP was revised following the IMF- ECF review mission in April 2021

± - Not Available (na) \* - estimate

† - revise

## 4.0 MONETARY DEVELOPMENTS

## 4.1 Monetary Policy Stance

During the review period, the CBL's monetary policy stance was anchored on price stability with emphasis on the management of Liberian dollar liquidity. As part of the CBL's monetary policy operations, the Bank issued bills at tenors of two-weeks, one-month, and three-months at the annual policy rate (MPR) of 15.0 percent.

## 4.2 Monetary Aggregates

At end April 2023, broad money (M2) supply grew by 1.3 percent to L\$167.16 billion, from the L\$165.03 billion recorded at the end-March 2023. From the liability side, this growth was triggered by 4.5 percent and 1.9 percent increases in currency outside banks, and demand deposits, respectively. Similarly, from the asset side, the increase was largely due to 6.3 percent and 6.4 percent growths in net credit to government and private sector, respectively. Additionally, the stock of Liberian dollars in circulation rose to L\$26.45 billion at end-April 2023, from the L\$25.65 billion recorded in the preceding month. This development was induced by the 4.5 percent rise in currency outside banks, increasing to L\$23.79 billion, from L\$22.77 billion at end-March 2023. However, currency in banks declined to L\$2.66 billion at end-April 2023 from L\$2.88 billion in the previous month.

Commercial banks' loans extended to various sectors of the economy in both currencies recorded growth during the month under review. Loans denominated in Liberian dollar rose by 1.9 percent to L\$5,068.44 million, on account of increases in loans to the extractive, services, oil & gas, and trade subsectors by 560.0 percent, 109.9 percent, 56.6 percent, and 4.5 percent, respectively. Additionally, US dollar denominated loans grew by 1.4 percent to US\$459.92 million, occasioned by increases in loans advanced to the personal and services subsectors by 19.4 percent and 8.3 percent, respectively.

Sectoral distribution of commercial banks' credits revealed that loans extended to extractive, services, oil & gas, and trade subsectors accounted for 68.5 percent of the total Liberian dollar denominated credits to the private sector. Similarly, the personal, and services subsectors constituted 38.8 percent of total United States dollar denominated credits to the private sector.

All deposits converted to Liberian dollar (as a percent of GDP) fell by 0.2 percentage point to 20.0 percent at end-April 2023, from the 20.2 percent reported in the previous month. The slight decrease was largely explained by declines in time and savings deposits.

<b>Direction of Trade (DOT)</b>				
<b>Destination of Export</b>	88.53	93.57	88.77	111.13
Africa	1.9	3	2.6	1.2
o/w ECOWAS	-	2.8	2.5	1.1
o/w Neighboring Countries	-	0.3	0.1	0.6
Asia	4.1	1.4	7.9	0.8
o/w The Middle East	0.4	0.9	4.5	0.3
o/w United Arab Emirate	0.1	0.8	3.6	0.3
then China	145.3	0	-	0.1
Europe	78.8	79	71.6	103.5
o/w Euro Zone	5.4	4	4	0.3
o/w The United Kingdom	5.4	4	4	0.3
Switzerland	44.6	47.3	42.6	59.8
North America & The Caribbean	3.7	4.3	3.5	4.5
o/w USA	3.7	4.3	3.5	4.5
<b>Sources of Import (cif)</b>	171.75	157.05	156.7	170.34
Africa	86.11	67.46	53.65	71.64
o/w ECOWAS	79.34	62.78	46.95	66.79
o/w Neighboring Countries	77.14	62.78	47.82	67.29
o/w Cote D Ivoire	76.91	61.26	44.35	64.9
Asia	58.42	66.52	77.34	72.86
o/w The Middle East	5.69	-	-	-
o/w United Arab Emirate	3.07	2.42	4.71	1.86
o/w China	8.42	20.9	23.35	26.45
o/w India	26.73	33.97	26.15	28.64
Europe	13.95	12.65	16.98	14.88
o/w Europe Zone	11.55	8.54	12.22	12.48
o/w The United Kingdom	2.04	2.06	2.63	6.39
o/w Spain	1.51	0.33	2.91	0.78
North America & The Caribbean	7.9	4.62	5.17	4.66
o/w USA	5.38	4.27	4.79	4.27
South & Central America	4.92	5.68	3.4	6.11
o/w Brazil	2.21	3.52	2.74	4.82
o/w Argentina	2.02	1.45	0.27	0.35
Oceania	0.44	0.11	0	0.18
o/w Australia	0.23	0.06	0	0.09

## 6.2 Direction of Trade (DOT)

The main destination of Liberia's exports in April 2023 was Europe, which accounted for US\$103.5 million worth of export proceeds. Of the total exports to the region, Switzerland accounted for US\$59.8 million. Relative to the sources of imports to Liberia, Asia and Africa amounted were the two main regions accounting for US\$72.9 million and US\$71.6 million, respectively. Imports from Cote d'Ivoire, India, and China amounted to US\$64.9 million, US\$28.6 million, and US\$26.5 million, respectively, during the review month.



Table 6: External Sector Statistics

External Trade (Value)	Apr - 22	23-Feb	23-Mar	23-Apr
	(Millions of US\$; Except Otherwise Indicated)			
Exports <sup>1</sup>	88.53	93.57	88.77	111.13
Iron Ore	28.62	29.63	28.07	38.11
Rubber	8.46	7.5	3.77	9.49
Gold	44.71	47.46	42.61	60.83
Diamond	0.48	2.03	2.51	1.11
Cocoa Bean	1.25	0.18	0.04	0.09
Palm Oil	1.08	2.68	0.14	0.01
Other Commodities	3.93	4.08	11.64	1.49
Imports (CIF) <sup>1†</sup>	171.75	157.05	156.7	170.34
Minerals, Fuel, Lubricants	84.99	66.87	50.63	71.98
o/w Petroleum Products	76.85	59.51	44.23	64.9
Food and Live Animals (incl. Animal and veg. oil)	42.61	43.24	38.68	35.85
o/w Rice	19.81	28.87	17.65	19.77
Machinery & Transport Equipment	19.01	23.58	40.4	26.31
Manufactured goods classified by materials	10.83	11.14	13.07	18.12
Other categories of imports	14.31	12.22	13.92	18.09
<b>Trade Balance</b>	<b>-83.22</b>	<b>-63.48</b>	<b>-67.93</b>	<b>-59.21</b>
<b>Total Trade</b>	<b>260.28</b>	<b>250.62</b>	<b>245.47</b>	<b>281.47</b>
<b>External Trade (Volume)</b>				
Rubber (MT)	7,160.08	3,427.54	2,500.18	8,317.75
Iron Ore (MT)	343,534.67	466,782.09	453,312.81	445,319.62
Cocoa Beans (MT)	508.13	69.09	13.64	30.38
Palm Oil (MT)	642.86	2,825.11	139.67	8.16
Gold (Oz)	25,700.08	32,028.00	28,559.00	38,326.65
Diamond (Crt)	1,229.46	11,574.05	10,348.65	4,449.35
Petroleum Products (MT)	15,017.21	11,455.70	15,396.14	25,306.92
Rice (MT)	45,970.83	58,683.10	37,088.21	39,467.12
<b>Other Indicators</b>				
Net Foreign Reserves Position	374.2	331.7	326.7	315.2
Import (CIF)	155.7	143.1	144.7	156.8
Gross International Reserves (GIR) <sup>/</sup>	641.5	587.9	581.7	570.6
Import covers (In Month) <sup>†</sup>	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.0
<b>Personal Remittances</b>				
Inflows	54.6	56.1	72.9	69.6
Outflows	6.7	5.1	5.5	6.4
<b>Net Inflows</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>63.2</b>

Table 2: Monetary Aggregates Statistics

Monetary Aggregates	Apr. - 22	Feb. - 23	Mar. - 23	Apr. -23
	<i>In Millions of LD; Except Otherwise Indicated</i>			
Liberian Dollars in Circulation - (LD)	22,436.52	25,770.72	25,648.14	26,450.89
-o/w Currency in banks (LD)	2,755.02	3,534.94	2,878.05	2,660.93
Money Supply (M1) in LD only	32,549.45	39,477.63	40,854.08	40,149.41
Quasi Money in LD only	7,089.44	7,512.48	7,185.22	7,513.56
Broad money (M2) in LD only	39,734.26	47,222.42	48,220.50	47,743.29
Broad money (M2) (both LD and USD Converted to LD)	139,291.89	160,931.86	165,033.42	167,163.87
Net Foreign Assets (NFA) – LD	34,480.21	15,688.06	18,291.73	17,156.39
Net Domestic Assets (NDA) – LD	104,811.68	145,243.80	146,741.69	150,007.48
Currency Outside Banks – LD	19,681.50	22,235.79	22,770.10	23,789.96
Demand Deposit – LD	75,571.68	88,778.74	92,725.71	94,533.84
Time & Savings Deposits – LD	43,662.51	48,650.84	49,016.78	44,275.35
Other Deposits – LD	376.20	1,266.50	520.84	4,564.73
<b>Loans to Private Sector</b>				
Commercial banks loans to private sector- USD	429.57	432.60	455.36	459.92
Commercial banks loans to private sector - LD	5,326.95	5,102.27	4,974.32	5,068.44
<b>Demand Deposits of commercial Banks</b>				
Demand deposits – USD	414.19	450.23	459.96	473.40
Demand deposits – LRD	12,867.95	17,241.84	18,083.98	16,359.45
Time & savings deposits – USD	241.58	258.91	257.78	222.62
Time & savings deposits – LRD	7,089.44	7,512.48	7,185.22	7,513.56
<b>Other Deposits**</b>				
Actual US\$ component of other Deposits	1.86	6.51	2.09	27.16
Liberian \$ component of other Deposits	95.37	232.31	181.20	80.32
Total Deposits both (USD & LRD) converted to LRD <sup>1</sup>	119,610.39	138,696.07	142,263.32	143,373.92
Liberian Dollar share of Broad Money	28.53	29.39	29.22	28.56

<sup>‡</sup> - Reserves excluding ECF borrowing from the IMF;

\* - estimate/projection

\*\* - Other Deposits Including Official and Manager Checks;

<sup>1</sup> - The total deposits (US and Liberian dollars) of commercial banks converted & expressed entirely in Liberian dollars.

### 4.3 FINANCIAL MARKET (FM) DEVELOPMENTS

Financial markets activities for April 2023 showed the continuous issuance of CBL bills in support of the Bank's monetary policy objectives. The bills were issued with tenors of 2-weeks, 1-month, and 3-months at the effective annual policy rate of 15.0 percent. The CBL continued its regular and timely redemption of the CBL bills and the dissemination of redemption reports. The Bank's policy implementation through the issuance of the CBL bills experienced a net injection of L\$1,014.94 million during the review month as total issuance was less the total redemption.

The total CBL bills issued during the month decreased by 27.9 percent to L\$5,551.40 million, from the L\$7,704.78 million issued in March 2023. The total redemption in April 2023 declined by 9.9 percent to L\$6,566.34 million compared to the previous month. Retail investors' subscriptions stood at 1.50 percent or L\$83.07 million of the total amounts issued, commercial banks' subscriptions remained high at 98.50 percent or L\$5,468.33 million.

There was no new issuance of Treasury bill (T-bills) operation in US dollars by CBL on behalf of the GoL. However, the outstanding US dollars T-bills securities remained US\$110.82 million while the outstanding Liberian dollars T-bills totalled L\$7,957.60 million at end-April 2023. The total outstanding US dollars Treasury bond reduced to US\$46.50 million at end-April 2023, from US\$47.41 million in the preceding month, due to the partial principal payment of US\$0.91 million. There was no new issuance of Liberian dollars Treasury bond and therefore no outstanding during the review month.

The lending, average savings, and time deposit rates were unchanged at 12.4 percent, 2.1 percent, and 3.5 percent, respectively, during the review period relative to the previous month. Additionally, money markets instruments such as repo were not traded during the month. In the interbank market, commercial banks continued to trade with only non-interest-bearing swaps to ease the liquidity disparity among banks for their international and intra-country transactions (Table 3).

Overall Balance (Surplus+; Deficit -)	<b>60.61</b>	<b>(17.54)</b>	<b>(4.80)</b>	<b>(9.44)</b>	-
Total Debt Stock	<b>1,809.42</b>	<b>2,023.41</b>	<b>2,021.34</b>	<b>2,106.15</b>	<b>4.20</b>
o/w Domestic	<b>735.84</b>	<b>887.25</b>	<b>884.86</b>	<b>961.06</b>	<b>8.61</b>
o/w Financial Institutions	660.82	829.96	827.93	833.25	0.64
o/w Other Debts	75.02	57.28	56.93	127.81	124.50
o/w External	<b>1,073.58</b>	<b>1,136.16</b>	<b>1,136.47</b>	<b>1,145.10</b>	<b>0.76</b>
o/w Multilateral	960.34	1,024.02	1,024.33	1,032.95	0.84
o/w Bilateral	113.24	112.14	112.14	112.14	-
<b>Memo Items</b>					
Government Revenue (% of GDP)	2.01	0.94	1.16	1.33	-
Government Expenditure (% of GDP)	0.50	1.35	1.27	1.55	-
Total Debt Stock (% of GDP)	45.33	46.56	46.52	48.47	-
NGDP (at Level)	3,974.0	4,332.0	4,332.0	4,332.00	-

Source: CBL calculation using MFDP's data

\*Projections

### 6.0 EXTERNAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

#### 6.1 Merchandise Trade

Developments in the external sector showed that the merchandise trade deficit decreased by 12.8 percent to US\$59.2 million (1.4 percent of GDP) in April 2023, from US\$67.9 million (1.6 percent of GDP) in March 2023. This development was driven by 25.2 growth in exports which outweighed the 8.7 percent increase in imports. However, total merchandise trade increased by 14.7 percent to US\$281.5 million (6.5 percent of GDP), from US\$245.5 million (5.6 percent of GDP) in the preceding month due to the increases in both import payments and export receipts.

Export earnings grew to US\$111.1 million (2.6 percent of GDP) in the review month, from the US\$88.8 million (2.0 percent of GDP) reported in March 2023, mainly on account of increase in receipts from gold, iron ore, and rubber. Payments for merchandise imports rose by US\$170.3 million (3.9 percent of GDP), from the US\$156.7 million (3.6 percent of GDP) recorded in the preceding month, due to increase in payments for minerals, fuel, & lubricants (mostly petroleum products), and manufactured good chiefly classified by materials.

Similarly, total government expenditure expanded by 21.3 percent to US\$67.2 million (1.6 percent of GDP) during the review month compared to the US\$55.36 million spent in March 2023. This development reflected an increase in current expenditure amidst decreases in both capital expenditure, and payments on loans, interest & other charges. Current expenditure rose by 31.2 percent to US\$59.7 million (1.4 percent of GDP), while capital expenditure, and payments on loans, interest & other charges declined by 26.9 percent and 18.9 percent to US\$5.1 million (0.1 percent of GDP) and US\$2.3 million (0.1 percent of GDP), respectively, during the month under review.

## 5.2 Total Public Debt

At end-April 2023, Liberia's stock of public debt grew to US\$2,106.2 million (48.5 percent of GDP) relative to the stock recorded at end-March 2023. The growth was driven by a 0.8 percent increase in external debt and an 8.7 percent rise in domestic debt. Domestic and external debts totaled US\$961.1 million (22.1 percent of GDP) and US\$1,145.1 million (26.4 percent of GDP), respectively, at end-April 2023.

**Table 5. GOL's Fiscal Operations Statistics**

Fiscal Operations	Apr-22	Feb-23 <sup>r</sup>	Mar-23 <sup>r</sup>	Apr-23	M-O-M
	(Millions of USD)				(% Change)
Government Revenue	<b>80.37</b>	<b>41.04</b>	<b>50.56</b>	<b>57.73</b>	14.16
<i>o/w Tax Revenue</i>	<b>41.57</b>	<b>32.05</b>	<b>39.38</b>	<b>51.42</b>	<b>30.57</b>
<i>o/w Taxes on Income &amp; Profits</i>	20.40	13.05	18.50	30.53	65.08
<i>o/w Taxes on Int'l Trade (Customs)</i>	15.70	13.64	14.16	14.43	1.93
<i>o/w Non-tax Revenue</i>	<b>38.80</b>	<b>8.99</b>	<b>11.18</b>	<b>6.31</b>	<b>(43.60)</b>
<i>o/w Property Income</i>	37.07	7.31	9.33	4.32	(53.70)
<i>o/w Administrative Fees &amp; Penalties</i>	1.73	1.68	1.86	1.99	7.13
<i>o/w Other Revenue (Including Grants)</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Government Expenditure	<b>19.76</b>	<b>58.58</b>	<b>55.36</b>	<b>67.17</b>	21.33
<i>o/w Current Expenditure</i>	17.31	46.93	45.55	59.77	31.22
<i>o/w Compensation</i>	7.98	18.35	15.75	25.39	61.23
<i>o/w Goods and Services</i>	7.26	13.43	21.71	27.68	27.48
<i>o/w Capital Expenditure</i>	1.75	5.60	6.95	5.08	(26.94)
<i>o/w Payments on Loans, interest &amp; other charges</i>	0.70	6.05	2.86	2.32	(18.87)

**Table 3: Financial Market and Interest Rates Statistics**

Market Instruments (CBL indexed Bills)	April-22	Feb-23	March-23	April-23
	<i>(In Millions of Liberian Dollar)</i>			
Bills Purchased per month on coupon basis	00.0	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	0.00
Redemption during the month (coupon rate)	00.0	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Bills (Index) outstanding on coupon basis</b>	00.0	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	0.00
Coupon rate on Index Bill (in %)	na	Na	na	na
Bills Purchased per month on EAR basis	4,832.79	4,387.71	7,704.78	5,551.40
Redemption during the month (EAR basis)	4,832.79	4,824.05	7,025.92	6,566.34
<b>Bill Outstanding (EAR basis)</b>	7,000.00	7,621.14	8,300.00	7,285.06
Effective Annual Rate (EAR)	20.00	15	15	15
<b>Total Purchases (coupon rate &amp; EAR)</b>	4,832.79	4,387.71	7,704.78	5,551.40
<b>Total Redemption (coupon rate &amp; EAR)</b>	4,832.79	4,824.05	7,025.92	6,566.34
<b>Total Outstanding Bills (coupon rate &amp; EAR)</b>	7,000.00	7,621.14	8,300.00	7,285.06
<b>CBL Foreign Exchange Auction<sup>1</sup></b>	<i>(In Millions of United States Dollar)</i>			
US Dollar offered	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
US Dollar Amount Sold	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Subscription	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Over (+)/ Under (-) Subscription</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Treasury Securities</b>	<i>(In Millions of Liberian Dollar)</i>			
T- Bills Issued (in LD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
T- Bills Redeemed (in LD)	0.00	0.00	290.00	0.00
T-Bills Outstanding	2,437.72	8,247.6	8,247.6	8,247.6
<b>Net Treasury Bills Operations<sup>^</sup> withdrawal (+)/Injection (-)</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate (T-Bills)	5.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
T- Bills Issued (In USD)	0.00	6.00	2.00	0.00
T- Bills Redeemed (Principal or Interest) (In USD)	0.00	0.00	1.38	0.00
T-Bills Outstanding (Repayment principal and interest)	47.66	110.04	110.82	110.82
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate (T-Bills)	7.16	7.16	7.16	7.16
Treasury Bond Issued (in LD for 2 years)	6,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Bond Outstanding (In LD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Coupon Payment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Outstanding coupon on Treasury Bond	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Early Redemption	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Coupon rate (%)	16.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Bond Issued (USD)		0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Bond Principal Payment		0.33	0.71	0.91
Treasury Bond Outstanding (In USD) (Coupon and Principal)	57.56	45.00	47.41	46.50
Coupon Payments (USD)	0.166	0.63	0.00	0.00
Total T-Bond Outstanding (Coupon & Principal In USD)	57.56	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<i>(As specified)</i>			
SCF rate	25.00	17.5	17.5	17.5
SCF Amount (In Millions LD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SDF overnight rate	0.05	0.07	0.07	0.07
SDF Amount (In Millions LD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<i>(As specified)</i>			
	<i>Interest Rates</i>			
- Lending rate	12.44	12.44	12.44	12.44
<i>Average Deposit rates</i>				
-Savings	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
-Time	3.53	3.53	3.53	3.53
<i>Money Markets Instrument (In percent)</i>				
Repo	5.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Swap lending	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source : CBL

^ - with Liquidity Effect

/1 – CBL Foreign Exchange Auction includes use of the remittance split to ease the demand for foreign currency

/2 – Treasury Bill issued and redeemed during the month were in US Dollar

#### 4.4 BANKING SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

The banking industry largely remained in compliance with the sector's regulatory requirements during the review period. The industry liquidity ratio decreased by 2.51 percentage points to 42.04 percent at end-April 2023 compared to the liquidity ratio reported at end-March 2023, which remained above the minimum regulatory requirement of 15.0 percent by 27.04 percentage points. Additionally, the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) declined by 4.46 percentage points to 22.29 percent and remained above the minimum regulatory requirement of 10 percent by 12.29 percentage points. However, Return on Assets (ROA) increased by 0.11 percentage points to 0.59 percent, and Return on Equity (ROE) grew by 0.66 percentage points to 4.29 percent at end-April 2023.

Total gross loan increased to L\$81.75 billion during the month under review, from L\$79.33 billion in March 2023. The ratio of non-performing loans to total loans also grew by 1.75 percentage points to 18.11 percent against the 10.0 percent regulatory tolerable limit in April 2023 relative to the preceding month.

**Table 4: Selected Financial Soundness Indicators (FSIs)**

Financial Soundness Indicators	Apr. - 22	Feb. - 23	Mar. - 23	Apr. - 23
	<i>(In Billions of Liberian Dollar)</i>			
Total Gross Loans	<b>73.34</b>	77.45	79.33	<b>81.75</b>
Total Non-performing Loans	16.57	13.01	12.83	15.11
Non-performing Loans to Total Gross Loans (ratio)	22.69	16.80	16.36	18.11
Gross Loan (percent change)	(0.22)	(0.21)	2.43	3.05
Non-performing Loans (percent change)	(5.15)	3.16	(1.38)	17.77
Returns on Assets (ROA)	0.89	0.12	0.48	0.59
Returns on Equity (ROE)	5.47	0.84	3.59	4.25
Liquidity Ratio***	46.64	44.03	44.55	42.04
Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)****	25.75	22.76	26.75	22.29

Source : CBL

\*\*\*\* - The Minimum Capital Adequacy Ratio is 10%

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

## 5.0 FISCAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

### 5.1 Total Revenue and Expenditure

Provisional statistics revealed an increased deficit in the Government of Liberia's (GoL) overall fiscal operations to 0.2 percent of GDP in April 2023, from the 0.1 percent of GDP reported in March 2023. This development was attributed to a growth in government expenditure which outweighed the increase in total revenue.

Total government revenue expanded to 1.3 percent of GDP in April 2023, from 1.2 percent of GDP recorded at end-March 2023. The revenue growth was due to an increase in tax revenue amidst a reduction in non-tax revenue. Tax revenue totaled US\$51.4 million (1.2 percent of GDP), while non-tax revenue amounted to US\$6.3 million (0.2 percent of GDP) during the month under review. The rise in tax revenue was mainly driven by increases in taxes on income & profits, and international trade tax, while the reduction in non-tax revenue was led by a decrease in property income.