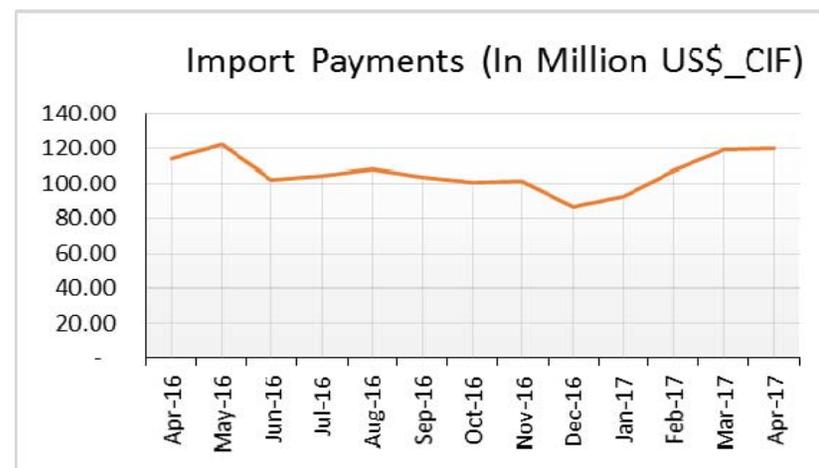




CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA (CBL)

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

Currency	Mar. - 17	Apr. - 17	
	Curr. Unit./US\$1	Curr Unit./US\$1	M-on-M Rate of Appr. (-)/Depr. (+)
LRD	104.50	106.50	1.9
GHC	4.34	4.19	-3.5
GMD	45.12	45.33	0.5
GNF	9,225.02	9,135.97	-1.0
NGN	306.00	305.40	-0.2
SLL	7,264.04	7,271.15	0.1

Sources: Central Banks of Liberia and WAMA: www.amao-wama.org/en/exchange.aspx and 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-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17
External Trade (Volume) – cont'd	(Metric Tons)			
- Petroleum Products	10,862	6,995	19,330	16,630
- Cocoa Beans	850	350	0.0	0.0
- Palm Oil	0.0	2,150	774	1,362
10 Inflation	(In percent)			
Overall (Year-on-year) Rate of Inflation	13.6	13.3	11.9	11.5
a. Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages Inflation	11.4	9.9	4.7	6.8
- Domestic Food Inflation	4.4	1.1	-4.9	-1.0
- Imported Food Inflation	18.7	17.0	8.5	12.3
b. Transport Inflation	23.5	24.5	28.5	27.8
c. Imported Fuels Inflation	9.9	19.5	24.5	21.3
Overall (Month-on-Month) Rate of Inflation	1.0	-1.5	0.6	-0.1
Core Inflation	(In percent)			
Inflation excluding Food & Non-alcoholic Beverages	16.3	12.1	14.1	14.1
Inflation excluding Imported Food	11.8	9.1	10.1	10.5
Inflation excluding Domestic Food	17.5	7.4	5.9	7.3
Inflation excluding Food and Transport	14.9	9.8	11.5	11.6
Production	(Metric Tons)			
Iron Ore	183,656	53,062	136,881	101,144±
Rubber	2,437	1,996	4,171	3,491±
Cement	23,391	27,563	32,514	32,385±
Beverages	(In Litres)			
Alcoholic	943,161±	970,152	977,280±	1,298,766±
Non-Alcoholic	1,019,08±	779,689	1,044,237	760,512±
11 Int'l Commodity Prices	US\$/Unit			
Iron Ore (US\$/MT)	80.8	88.8	87.2	70.4
Rubber (US\$/MT)	2555.2	2,711.5	2,366.7	2,231.1
Crude Oil (US\$/Barrel)/1	53.6	54.4	51.0	52.2
Rice (US\$/MT)	372.6	368.5	367.8	374.5
Cocoa Beans (US\$/MT)	2,195.1	2,034.1	2,063.1	1,961.2
Palm Oil	726.5	706.8	663.3	623.2

* 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

Output of key commodities produced in the economy have recorded mixed trends for the month of April, 2017 compared with March 2017. During the month, cement output dropped to an estimated 32,385 metric tons, down from 32,514 metric tons produced in the previous month. The 0.4 percent decrease in output was largely due to the slowdown in construction activities, as the rainy season approaches. Beverage production increased to an estimated 2.06 million liters, from 2.02 million liters produced during the preceding month. The 1.9 percent rise in beverage output was attributed to the increase in the production of soft drinks. Production of iron ore dropped by 35,737 metric tons to an estimated 101,144 metric tons, down from 136,881 metric tons produced in the previous month. The decrease in iron ore production was attributed to a decrease in the price of the commodity on the global market. Rubber production shrank to a projected 3,491 metric tons, down from 4,171 metric tons recorded in March, 2017. The 680 metric tons reduction in output was a result of a reduction in the price of the commodity on the global market.

Consumer Prices

Headline inflation for the month of April increased to 11.5 percent, from the 7.2 percent recorded for the same period a year ago. The 4.3 percentage points rise in inflation was generally explained by the increase in all of the major groups except health which slumped; and education which remained unchanged.

Monthly analysis revealed that the rate of inflation fell to negative 0.1 percent, from negative 0.6 percent a month ago. The dip in inflation in April, 2017 was driven by fall in the inflation rates of all of the major groups, except health and education.

MONETARY DEVELOPMENTS

Monetary Policy Stance

The monetary policy stance of the CBL during the month ended-April, 2017 continued to be anchored on price stability through broad exchange rate stability.

As was the case of the previous month, the foreign exchange auction and the Treasury Bills remained the most available tools used by the CBL to conduct its monetary policy operations.

Monetary Aggregates and Credit

Broad money supply (M2) at end-April, 2017 grew by 0.6 percent to L\$68,044.3, from L\$67,616.7 million recorded at end-March, 2017, occasioned by 0.1 percent and 2.3 percent growth in demand deposit and Saving & Time deposit, respectively.

Net foreign assets (NFA) for April, 2017 grew by 3.6 percent to US\$ 33,772.7 million, from L\$32,593.2 million reported at end-March, 2017; on account of a 21.2 percent growth in assets of banking institutions. Net domestic assets (NDA), on the other hand, contracted by 2.1 percent to US\$ 34,271.6 million from US\$35,023.5 million.

Commercial bank loans to private sector in US dollars increased by 2.9 percent to US\$390.1 million, from US\$379.1 million at end-April, 2017. The Liberian dollars component of loans to private sector also rose by 5.7 percent to L\$3,170.7 million, from L\$3,000.2 million at end-April, 2017.

Exchange Rate

At end-April, 2017, the average exchange rate between the Liberian and the US dollars depreciated by 2.4 percent to L\$106.50/US\$1.00, from L\$104.00/US\$1.00 as was recorded in March, 2017. The end-of-period (EOP) exchange rate also depreciated by 1.6 percent to L\$106.14/US\$1.00, from L\$104.50/US\$1.00. Year-on-year exchange rate analysis revealed that the average exchange rate depreciated by 16.1 percent and the EOP, by 16.4 percent. The constant depreciation of the Liberian dollar continues to be prompted by the growing demand for US dollars in the Liberian economy.

Analysis of the EOP exchange rate movements for the month of April, 2017 in the WAMZ showed that the Liberian Dollar, the Gambian Dalasi and Sierra Leonean Leone depreciated by 1.9 percent, 0.5 percent and 0.1 percent respectively, while the Ghanaian Cedis, the Guinean Franc and the Nigerian Naira appreciated by 3.5 percent, 1.0 percent and 0.2 percent, respectively. (Table 2). The global commodity price movement and, especially the high demand for foreign currency to facilitate imports, remains the most likely drivers of the depreciation of the sub-Regional currencies.

	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17
Non-performing Loans (% change)	N/A	36.8	-33.4	26.8
Returns on Assets (ROA)	0.3	0.2	-0.1	0.3
Returns on Equity (ROE)	1.5	0.8	-0.8	1.9
Liquidity Ratio****	53.3	50.7	49.8	52.1
7 Fiscal Operations				
7a Revenue, Expenditure & Debt	(Millions of US\$)			
Actual Revenue & Grants	44.3	34.2	50.7	39.3
Projected Revenue & Grants	38.7	33.7	39.2	49.5
Expenditure	36.7	31.4	46.2	43.9
Public Debt Stock	775.0	780.0	808.9	830.8
Domestic	268.3	268.2	267.7	267.7
External	506.7†	511.8	541.2	563.1
7b Treasury Securities	(Millions of L\$)			
T- Bills Issued	-51.3	-45.2	-51.8	-52.3
T- Bills Redeemed	97.5	49.0	49.3	51.3
Net GoL Treasury Bills Operations^	46.3	3.8	-2.5	-1.0
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate_T Bills	2.8	3.4	3.0	3.2
Bond Issued (2 yrs.) amount in Billion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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	15.0	10.6	19.1	16.3
- O/w Iron Ore	4.6	1.4	4.3	3.3
- O/w Rubber	4.2	4.4	9.2	7.4
- O/w Mineral	2.0	4.0	4.3	4.6
-o/w Cocoa Bean	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
-o/w Palm Oil	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.4
8b Imports (F.O.B)/1	85.5	100.2	112.3	112.7
Minerals, Fuel, Lubricants	26.9	36.6	48.4	48.1
-O/w Petroleum Products	25.6	33.3	45.6	44.8
Food and Live Animals	12.9	21.0	26.3	26.9
-O/w Commercial Rice	0.3	13.1	14.7	16.6
-O/w Non-commercial Rice	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5
Machinery & Transport Equipment	22.4	20.1	14.9	11.7
Import (C.I.F)	92.3	107.6	119.4	120.0
Trade Balance	-70.5	-89.6	-93.2	-96.4
9 External Trade (Volume)	(Metric Tons)			
- Rubber	2,438	2,216	4,171	3,732
-Iron Ore	183,656	53,062	136,881	101,144
-Commercial Rice	7,006	286,821	343,153	363,452
-Non-commercial Rice	2,209	2,151	3,589	2,907

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

Table 1: Fact Sheet

	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17
1 Monetary	<i>(Millions of US\$)</i>			
CBL Net Foreign Exchange Reserves Position (Including SDRs) [†]	185.0	170.3	194.6	183.4
CBL Gross Foreign Reserves (excluding SDRs)	276.6	261.6	233.5	225.1
Liberian Dollars in Circulation	12,224.8	12,239.6	12,569.5	12,424.5
Money Supply (M1) in L\$ only	16,043.1	16,032.0	16,508.7	16,501.3
Broad money (M2) in L\$ only	21,640.2	21,276.9	21,843.7	21,886.8
Broad money (M2) in both L\$ and US\$*	67,960.0	67,353.5	67,616.7	68,044.3
	<i>(In percent)</i>			
Liberian Dollar share of Broad Money	31.8	31.6	32.3	32.2
Interest Rates				
- Lending rate	13.4	13.0	13.3	13.3
-Average Deposit rates				
-Savings	2.0	3.9	3.6	5.2
-Time	5.0	5.1	4.6	3.6
	<i>(In Millions of Currencies)</i>			
Commercial banks loans to private sector - US\$	357.7	381.9	379.1	390.1
Commercial banks loans to private sector - L\$	3,213.8	3,036.1	3,000.2	3,170.7
- Demand Deposits of commercial banks				
Demand deposits - US\$	290.2	287.5	280.2	274.4
Demand deposits - L\$	5,373.1	5,269.2	5,558.2	5,625.4
- Time & Savings Deposits of commercial banks				
Time & savings deposits - US\$	155.0	162.0	158.5	159.5
Time & savings deposits - L\$	5,383.9	5,231.4	5,321.1	5,371.9
- Other Deposits**				
Actual US\$ component of other deposits	3.3	1.4	1.3	0.9
Liberian \$ component of other deposits	213.2	13.4	13.9	13.6
2 CBL's Foreign Exchange Auction	<i>(Millions of US\$)</i>			
US Dollar Amount Sold	7.0	4.0	1.9	2.9
Total Subscription	15.2	1.5	4.1	4.5
Over(+)- / Under(-) Subscription	8.2	(2.5)	2.2	1.6
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	31.6	47.4	174.9	167.3
Outflows	16.7	36.9	67.4	48.0
Net flows	14.9	10.5	107.4	119.3
5 Exchange Rate	<i>(USD/LD)</i>			
End of Period	104.5	103.5	104.5	106.5
Period Average	103.3	102.2	104.0	106.1
6 Financial Soundness Indicators (FSI)	<i>(In percent)</i>			
Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)***	21.8	1.4	17.4	32.0
Non-performing Loans to Total Loans	13.2	17.6	15.8	16.5

Financial Market Developments

Developments in the T-bill market for the month of April, 2017 indicate a net withdrawal of Liberian dollars totalling 1.0 million compared with a net withdrawal of L\$2.5 million in the preceding month, simply explained by excess redemption over issuance, but with higher weighted average yield of approximately 3.2 percent, 20 basis points above the yield in March, 2017.

Banking Sector Developments

The banking industry continued to show viability with capital adequacy ratio and liquidity position remaining far above the minimum requirements of 10.0 percent and 15.0 percent, respectively. Provisional data at end-April, 2017 showed that liquidity position of the industry rose by 2.3 percentage points to 52.1 percent above the 49.8 percent recorded in March, 2017 and the industry capital adequacy ratio (CAR) improved by 14.6 percentage points to 32.0 percent, from an estimate of 17.4 percent in the previous month. Non-performing loans ratio grew slightly by 0.7 percentage points to 16.5 percent, from 15.8 percent recorded in the preceding month.

FISCAL DEVELOPMENTS**Revenue (including Grants) & Expenditures**

Fiscal operations in April, 2017, resulted in a deficit of US\$4.6 million, down from a surplus of US\$4.5 million recorded in the previous month, mainly explained by month-on-month 22.5 percent decrease in total actual revenue & grants compare with the 5.0 percent reduction in total public spending during the review period, respectively. Tax and non-tax revenue & grants constituted 94.9 percent and 34.1 percent, respectively of total revenue and grants during the period under review. Actual revenue and grants reduced below budgetary projections during the month by US\$10.2 million (20.6 percent) during the review month. Recurrent and capital expenditure accounted for 101.1 percent and 4.1 percent of total public expenditure for the review period, respectively.

Liberia's public debt stock at end-April, 2017 stood at US\$830.8 million, growing by 2.7 percent against the stock of US\$808.9 million recorded at end-March, 2017, mainly explained by growth in external debt stock to multilateral creditors during the review period. Domestic and external debt stocks constituted 32.2 percent and 67.8 percent of Liberia's total public debt stock at end-April, 2017, respectively (See Table 1).

EXTERNAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS**Merchandise Trade**

From the projected statistics for export earnings and import payments for April, 2017, merchandise trade deficit deteriorated by 3.5 percent to US\$96.4 million, from US\$93.2 million recorded for March, 2017, due to expected growth in import (fob) payments against decline in export receipts (Table 1).

Exports

Projected merchandise export earnings showed that earnings fell by 14.7 percent at end-April, 2017 to US\$16.3 million, from US\$19.1 million during the previous month. The fall in exports receipts was highly attributable to declines in receipts from Iron ore and Rubber by 23.1 percent and 19.3 percent, respectively.

Imports

Import payments (FOB) at end-April, 2017 is projected to rise slightly by 0.4 percent to US\$112.7 million, from US\$112.3 million reported at the end of the preceding month. The 0.4 percent growth in payments was mainly on account of payments for Food and Live Animals which rose by 2.4 percent.

Global Commodity Price Review

Global commodity price index in April, 2017 fell for the second time by 0.1 percent, from a revised decline of 4.5 percent in March, 2017. The minor decline in average global commodity price, when compared with the previous month, was on the back of drop in metal prices (especially Iron ore) that was level out by the increase in energy (mainly crude oil) price.

Iron ore

The global price of iron ore at end-April, 2017 was highly hit, thus slumping for the second time to US\$70.4 per metric ton, from US\$87.2 per metric ton recorded at end-March, 2017. The decline in the price of the commodity can be attributed to expected decline in the demand for steel due mainly to credit tightening coupled with the restriction imposed by the Chinese Government on steel production in the preceding month.

Rubber (natural)

At end-April 2017, the global price of rubber declined, but less than the decline experienced during March, 2017 by 5.7 percent to US\$2,231.1 per metric ton,

from US\$2,366.7 per metric ton recorded during the preceding month. The fall in the price of the commodity is in anticipation of increasing supply of the commodity with slowing demand from China.

Petroleum (Crude Oil)¹

The price of petroleum moderately revived from a decline in the previous month to US\$52.2 per barrel during the period ended-April 2017, from US\$50.9 per barrel during the third month of 2017. The 2.6 percent revival in the price of the commodity was occasioned by news by OPEC to extend production cut decision.

Food (Rice)

Food Price declined at end-April, 2017 due to declines in all subgroups except meat. Contrary to declines in cereal (a subgroup of food) price at end-April, 2017, the price of rice rose by 1.8 percent to US\$374.5 per metric, from US\$367.8 per metric ton in the preceding month due mainly to increased demand for the commodity mainly from part of Asia.

Palm Oil

The international price of Crude palm oil continued its price decline for the third successive time in 2017. At end-April 2017, the price of crude palm oil slumped to US\$623.2 per metric ton, from US\$663.3 per metric ton at end-March 2017. The 6.0 percent fall in the price of the commodity was on account of expected output glut that had continued from preceding months.

Gross Foreign Reserves

By the end of April, 2017, foreign reserves position (excluding SDR holdings) of the CBL declined by 3.6 percent to US\$225.1 million, from US\$233.5 million reported during the previous month, due mainly to slump in cash balances with Banks abroad during the period (See Table 1).

Month-of-Import Covers³

The decline in gross foreign reserve at end-April, 2017, when matched against the rise in import payments, caused month-of-import cover to slump to 1.9 months, down from 2.0 month in March, 2017.

¹Crude oil price is the average of the three global oil price benchmarks: Dated Brent, West Texas Intermediate and Dubai Fateh.

³Calculated by dividing the stock of gross foreign reserve (excluding SDRs) in the month by total import payments (on cif basis, excluding service payments) in the same month