



CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA



PRESS RELEASE

CBL Moves to Ease Economic Impact of COVID-19

MONROVIA – March 24, 2020: The Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Tuesday, March 24, 2020, instituted several policy measures to ease the negative impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Liberian economy. Among the measures, the CBL has suspended for three months, all charges on the Automated Clearing House (ACH), Direct Credit (DC) and Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS). Commercial banks are accordingly required to suspend all charges to customers related to these Electronic Payment Channels. The measure will reduce the cost of clearing, payments and transfers for individuals and businesses.

Mobile Money Operators (MMOs) have also suspended for one month, all charges to customers for transfer of money from their bank accounts to their mobile money accounts (vice versa). All merchant payment transaction fees (shops, stores, supermarkets, gas stations, general markets, retail outlets, etc.) using mobile money as payment option for goods, are also suspended for one month.

In line with the measures, the daily transaction limit for mobile money transactions has been adjusted by the CBL for three months as follows: subject to Anti-Money Laundering/Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) requirements:

- Level 1 Category has been increased from US\$250.00 to a maximum of US\$500.00 or its equivalent in Liberian dollar;
- Level 2 Category has been increased from US\$1,000.00 to US\$2,000.00 or its equivalent in Liberian dollar; and
- Level 3 Category has been increased from US\$2,000.00 to US\$4,000.00 or its equivalent in Liberian dollar.

The CBL has also adjusted for three months the monthly aggregate transaction limits for purchasing of goods and transfers through mobile money as follows: subject to Anti-Money Laundering/Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) requirements.

- Level 1 Category has been increased from US\$2,000.00 to a maximum of US\$3,000.00 or its equivalent in Liberian dollar;
- Level 2 Category has been increased from US\$8,000.00 to US\$12,000.00 or its equivalent in Liberian dollar; and
- Level 3 Category has been increased from US\$20,000.00 to US\$30,000.00 or its equivalent in Liberian dollar.

Mobile Money Operators and Commercial banks have also agreed to suspend for one month, all charges for person to person (P2P) funds transfer via internet or mobile banking services.

As part of the policy measures, the CBL has also suspended temporarily for three months, the rule on credits (asset classification and provisioning) to borrowers in the aviation, hospitality, tourism, agricultural and businesses

involved in cross-border trading, considering the negative impact of the coronavirus on the cashflows of the affected sectors of the economy.

This means that commercial banks and other licensed financial institutions are required to exercise flexibility to borrowers in those sectors and categories of borrowers, including but not limited to flexible restructuring terms, on a case-by-case basis. This flexibility shall not, however, apply to delinquent borrowers prior to the outbreak.

The decisions were reached following recent consultative meetings with both Commercial Banks and Mobile Money Operators (MMOs) regarding measures intended to ease the economic burdens of the pandemic on the population.

Meanwhile, the CBL is requiring all banks and MMOs to put in place preventive measures consistent with NPHIL health protocols. Accordingly, all customers are required to respectfully observe and adhere to these measures.

The CBL reaffirms its commitment of working closely with the banks to ensure availability of liquidity in the system and assure the public not to panic.

The Bank will continue to monitor the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and shall take further steps to ease the adverse effects on the Liberian economy.