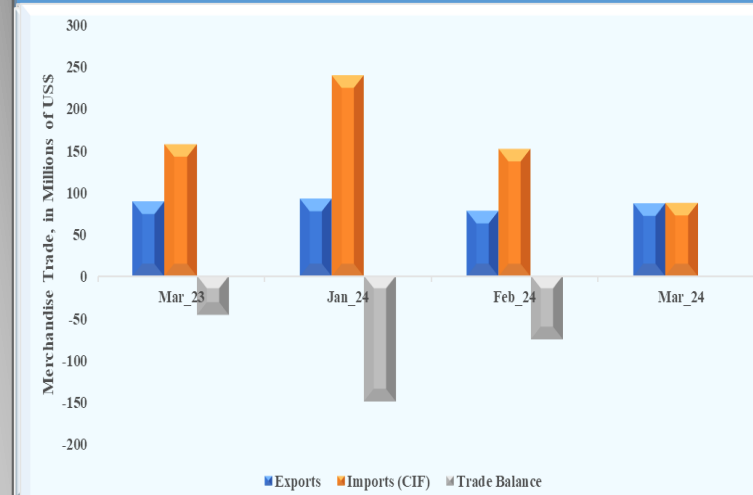


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GLOBAL PRICE	Mar- 23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24		
	(Commodity price per Unit of Measure)				MoM	YoY
Iron ore (US\$/MT)	128.37	135.82	124.39	109.79	(11.7)	(14.47)
Gold (US\$/Oz)	1,912.73	2,034.04	2,023.24	2,158.01	6.7	12.82
Rubber (US\$/MT)	1,580.00	1,800.00	2,024.50	2,390.40	18.1	51.29
Cocoa Beans (US\$/MT)	2,750.00	4,400.00	5,556.26	7,088.87	27.6	157.78
Palm oil (US\$/MT)	972.06	844.90	856.93	942.92	10.0	(3.00)
Crude oil (US\$/BBL)	76.47	77.67	80.55	83.55	3.7	9.25
Food Price Index (FAO) ¹	128.20	118.20	117.30	118.30	0.9	(7.72)
Rice_5% broken (US\$/MT)	476.00	620.00	594.00	584.00	(1.7)	22.69
Sugar (US\$/MT)	450.00	480.00	502.43	475.10	(5.4)	5.58
Commodity Price Index No ²	168.29	45322	45351	163.17	2.8	(3.04)

1/Commodity Food Price Index includes Cereal, Vegetable Oils, Meat, Seafood, Sugar, Bananas, and Oranges Price Indices²/ 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 10 Number 3.

2.0 OVERVIEW

Production statistics for the month of March 2024 showed mixed trends in the outputs of key commodities compared to February 2024 outputs. Cement, beverages, gold, and diamond outputs decreased, while iron ore and rubber outputs increased in the month.

Headline inflation decreased to 9.5 percent, from the 10.7 percent reported in February 2024 mainly due to decrease in the prices of food & non-alcoholic beverages items of the CPI basket.

The CBL's 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 two-week, one-month, and three-month tenors at the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) of 20.0 percent per annum.

Broad money (M2) supply contracted by 0.2 percent to L\$227.61 billion at end-March 2024 relative to the L\$228.16 billion reported at end-February 2024. This development was driven by a 3.5 percent decline in net domestic assets (NDA) of the banking system.

Key indicators of the Liberian banking system remained favorable during the review period as commercial banks were mostly in compliance with the sector's regulatory requirements. The industry liquidity ratio increased by 2.50 percentage points and remained well above the minimum regulatory requirement of 15.0 percent. The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) decreased by 4.32 percentage points but similarly, it remained above the sector's regulatory requirements of 10.0 percent. However, both Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE) increased by 0.26 percent and 1.91 percent, respectively, at end March 2024.

7.6 Sugar

Price of sugar decreased by 5.4 percent to US\$475.10 per metric ton, from US\$502.43 recorded in the previous month. Annual comparison showed the price of sugar increased by 5.6 percent from US\$450.00 per metric ton in March 2023.

7.7 Palm Oil

The price of palm oil increased by 10.0 percent in March 2024 to US\$942.92 per metric ton, from US\$856.93 per metric ton in the previous month, occasioned by climatic conditions and low stockpile. Compared to March of the previous year, the price of palm oil fell by 3.0 percent, from US\$972.06 per metric ton.

7.8 Rice

The price for rice decreased by 1.7 percent to US\$584.00 per metric ton in March 2024, from US\$594.00 per metric ton in February, on account of improved supplies from producing countries. Annual comparison indicated rice price increased by 22.7 percent, from US\$476.00 per metric ton in March 2023.

7.9 Cocoa Beans

Cocoa bean price increased by 27.6 percent to US\$7,088.87 in March 2024, from US\$5,556.26 per metric ton in February, led by supply constraints caused by bad weather in major producing countries. Compared to March 2023, the price of cocoa beans increased by 157.8 percent from US\$2,750.00 per metric ton.

Commodity Price Outlook

Global commodity market outlook of the World Bank Pink Sheet indicates global commodity prices will continue on an upward trend for March 2024, on account of rising tensions in the Middle East. Overall commodity price indices measured in US dollars for energy, non-energy, agriculture, fertilizers, metal & minerals, and precious metals, are expected to increase by 2.1 percent to US\$105.90, from US\$103.74 recorded in February.

Price of Liberia's major merchandise imports of petroleum is expected to increase by 3.7 percent, but rice is expected to decrease by 1.7 percent.

Price of Liberia's merchandise export of iron ore is expected to decrease by 11.7 percent to US\$109.79 per metric ton, from US\$124.39 per metric ton in the previous month.

7.1 Iron ore

Price of iron ore decreased by 8.4 percent to US\$124.39 per metric ton in March 2024, continuing a falling trend from US\$135.82 per metric ton in February 2024. The decrease in Iron ore price was due to restraints in purchase by steelmaking companies, and market sentiments. The year-on-year comparison showed price declined by 14.5 percent, from US\$128.37 recorded in March 2023.

7.2 Gold

Price of gold increased by 6.7 percent to US\$2,158.01 per ounce in March 2024, from US\$2,023.24 per ounce in February 2024 on account of a weaker US dollar and increasing market volatility. Year-on-year comparison indicated the price increased by 12.8 percent, from US\$1,912.73 recorded in March 2023.

7.3 Crude Oil (Petroleum) price

Price of petroleum increased by 3.7 percent to US\$ 83.55 per barrel in March 2024. The rise in petroleum price was driven by lower crude exports from Iraq and Saudi Arabia and the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Compared to March 2023, the price of petroleum increased marginally by 9.3 percent from US\$ 76.47 per barrel.

7.4 Rubber

Rubber price increased by 18.1 percent in March to US\$2,390.40 per metric ton, from US\$2,024.50 per metric ton recorded in February 2024, mainly due to adverse weather conditions in producing countries. Year-on-year comparison showed rubber price increased by 51.3 percent from US\$1,580.0 in March 2023.

7.5 Food Price (FAO)

FAO food price index (FFPI) reversed its declining trend in March 2024 and increased by 0.9 percent to US\$118.30 from US\$117.30 in February 2024. The increase was driven by corresponding rises in the price indices for meat, dairy, and vegetable oils.

The Government of Liberia's (GoL) fiscal operations reported a surplus of 0.2 percent of GDP in its overall balance in March 2024, despite slight reduction in government revenue. Expenditure rose to US\$42.7 million, while revenue decreased to US\$51.7 million

Public debt stock at end-March 2024 slightly rose to US\$2,413.1 million (53.0 percent of GDP).

The merchandise trade deficit reduced by 97.5 percent in March 2024 against the deficit recorded in the preceding month, while total trade decreased by 23.9 percent, largely due to decline in import payments. Gross International Reserves (GIR) decreased by 5.0 percent to US\$422.2 million at end-March 2024 relative to the GIR position reported in the previous month, mainly on account of declines in foreign liquid assets excluding Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and an increase in government demand deposits. Consequently, the months of import cover remained flat at 0.0 month of imports in March 2024 compared to the preceding month.

Net personal remittance inflows (including remittances terminated to mobile wallet) decreased by 8.5 percent (0.7 percent of GDP) in March 2024 compared to the amount recorded during the preceding month. The Liberian dollar depreciated against the US dollar on both average and end-of-period bases during the review month by 1.1 percent and 0.6 percent to L\$192.55/US\$1.00 and L\$192.80 /US\$1.00, respectively, compared to February 2024. This development was primarily driven by demand for foreign exchange, particularly for restocking inventories.

3.0 REAL SECTOR & PRICE DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Production Analyses of Key Commodities

Movements of key commodity-output were mixed in March 2024 compared to the preceding month. Cement, beverages, gold, and diamond outputs recorded decreases, while iron ore and rubber outputs increased in March 2024 against the previous month.

In the agriculture subsector, rubber output rose by 4.6 percent to 5,512 metric tons in March 2024, from 5,270 metric tons recorded in the previous month. This development was mainly explained by increase in the production of the commodity by smallholder farmers during the review period. When matched against the same period a year ago, rubber output rose by 69.6 percent.

In the mining subsector, diamond output slumped by 54.8 percent to 3,506 carats in the month under review, from 7,758 carats in February 2024, largely due to reduced artisanal mining activities. When compared to the corresponding period of 2023, diamond production fell by 66.1 percent. Iron ore production increased by 2.2 percent to 470,000 metric tons in March 2024, compared to 460,000 metric tons produced in the preceding month mainly due to demand for the commodity. On a year-on-year basis, the output of iron ore rose by 1.1 percent. Gold output remained relatively stable, decreasing by 29 ounces, to 29,942 ounces in March 2024 from 29,971 ounces in February 2024. Compared to the same period a year ago, gold production increased by 24.8 percent.

For the manufacturing subsector, beverages (alcoholic & non-alcoholic) production decreased by 0.4 percent to 3.89 million liters in March 2024, from 3.88 million liters in the previous month, due to the availability of excess stock. Beverage production increased by 129.5 percent compared with the same period in 2023. When disaggregated, alcoholic beverages production constituted 29.9 percent, while non-alcoholic beverages production accounted for 70.1 percent of total beverage production. Cement output increased by 0.9 percent to 65,373 metric tons during the review month, from 64,730 metric tons reported in the previous month reflecting inventory accumulation. However, when annualized, cement production fell by 4.1 percent.

3.2 Consumer Prices

During the review month, headline inflation moderated to 9.5 percent, from the 10.7 percent reported in February 2024. The moderation in inflation was mainly attributed to decrease in the prices of imported food items, and food & non-alcoholic beverages components of the CPI basket. Similarly, on a month-on-month basis, inflation plummeted to -0.1 percent, from the 0.4 percent reported in the previous month. The decline was mainly on account of decreases in the prices

Gambian dalasi was the only currency that appreciated against the United States dollar, while on the other hand Guinean franc and Sierra Leonean leone remained stable in the region. When compared to March 2023, almost all currencies in the WAMZ fell against the US dollar, except the Guinean franc which appreciated against the US dollar by 3.8 percent, occasioned by strong return of exports proceeds. The Gambian dalasi, the Liberian dollar, the leone, the Ghanaian cedi, and the naira depreciated by 19.9 percent, 20.7 percent, 48.3 percent, 44.3 percent, and 72.9 percent, respectively.

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

Rate & Currency	Mar-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Appr (+)/Depr (-)	
					MoM	YoY
Exchange Rate	LD/USD				Percent change	
	Currency per USD					
GHC	7.04	11.92	12.21	12.65	(3.5)	(44.3)
GMD	53.50	64.75	66.96	66.81	0.2	(19.9)
GNF	8,829.52	8,507.35	8,507.68	8,504.60	0.0	3.8
LRD	153.56	189.45	190.53	192.55	(1.1)	(20.7)
NGN	415.85	892.28	1,491.88	1,534.10	(2.8)	(72.9)
SLL	11.70	22.71	22.62	22.62	(0.0)	(48.3)
LRD End-of-period Exchange Rate						
LRD	152.72	190.01	191.60	192.80	(0.6)	(20.4)

Source: CBL, WAMA: 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

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index (FFPI) increased by 0.9 percent in March 2024. The Commodity Price Index of fuel and non-fuel commodities increased in March 2024. The increase in the FFPI index was led by increases in the price indices for meat, dairy, and vegetable oils.

6.2 Direction of Trade (DOT)

The main destination of Liberia's exports in March 2024 was Europe, which accounted for US\$ 73.0 million worth of the export proceeds, of which Switzerland accounted for US\$ 53.9 million or 73.8 percent. For the sources of imports to Liberia, Asia was the main region accounting for US\$ 48.61 million. Imports from China and India accounted for US\$ 23.95 million and US\$ 10.11 million respectively, during the review month.

6.3 Personal Remittances

Personal remittance inflows (net), including remittances terminated through mobile wallet, rose by 3.1 percent to US\$75.5 million (1.7 percent of GDP) in March 2024, compared to the US\$73.2 million (1.6 percent of GDP) recorded in preceding month. This development was occasioned by 5.3 percent rise in inward remittances that outweighed the 37.6 percent increase in outward remittances. Inward and outward remittances amounted to US\$82.1 million and US\$6.6 million respectively in the review month, from the US\$70.0 million and US\$4.8 million recorded, respectively, in the previous month.

6.4 Gross International Reserves

Gross International Reserves (GIR) decreased by 5.0 percent to US\$422.2 million at end-March 2024 relative to the US\$444.4 million reported in the previous month, mainly on account of declines in the CBL foreign liquid assets excluding Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and an increase in government demand deposits. However, the months of imports cover grew to 3.9 months in March 2024, compared to the 2.6 months recorded in the preceding month.

6.5 Exchange Rate Developments

The Liberia dollar vis-à-vis the US dollar at end-March 2024, depreciated by 0.6 percent to L\$192.80/US\$1.00 compared to the L\$190.53/US\$1.00 reported in the previous month. Similarly, on a year-on-year basis, the Liberian dollar depreciated by approximately 20.4 percent.

In terms of performance of the average exchange rate in the sub-region, the currencies of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) were mixed relative to the US dollar in March 2024 when compared to the previous month. The currencies that depreciated were as follows: Liberian dollar by 1.1 percent, the Nigerian naira by 2.8 percent, and the Ghanaian cedi by 3.5 percent.

of food and non-alcoholic beverages, imported food items and housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels components of the CPI basket.

Additionally, core inflation¹ moderated to 2.6 percent in March, from the 3.3 percent recorded a month ago. This development was on account of decreases in the prices of clothing and footwear, health, furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance and housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels components of the CPI basket.

Table 1: Production and Price Statistics

Production	Mar- 2023	Jan - 2024	Feb- 2024	Mar - 2024
	<i>(In Metric ton, Ounce, Carat and Liter)</i>			
Iron Ore (Metric ton)	465,000	515,000	460,000	470,000
Gold (Ounces)	39,823	40,107	29,971	29,942
Diamond (Carat)	10,349	4,306	7,758	3,506
Rubber (Metric ton)	3,250	6,456	5,270	5,512
Cement (Metric ton)	68,133	70,624*	64,730	65,373
Total Beverages (liter)	1,690,250	2,816,927	3,893,199	3,878,448
Alcoholic	1,445,577	1,470,608	1,529,036	1,160,550
Non-Alcoholic	244,673	1,346,319	2,364,163	2,717,898
Inflation	<i>(In percent)</i>			
Overall (Y-o-Y) Rate of Inflation	6.10	10.52	10.74	9.45
a. Food and Non-alcoholic Beverage Inflation	-5.38	26.11	28.37	25.51
- Domestic Food Inflation	-15.01	19.45	31.68	35.31
- Imported Food Inflation	3.60	31.91	25.50	17.84
b. Transport Inflation	22.89	6.47	6.13	5.71
c. Imported Fuels Inflation	-9.47	16.23	15.00	13.91
Overall (M-o-M) Rate of Inflation	1.07	1.37	0.37	-0.11
Core Inflation				
Inflation excluding Food & NAB ¹	11.54	4.16	3.68	3.00
Inflation excluding Imported Food	6.53	6.61	8.00	7.87
Inflation excluding Domestic Food	9.63	8.65	7.17	5.29
Inflation excluding Food and Transport	9.94	3.80	3.29	2.57
Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP)²		3,741.4	3,741.4	3,741.1
Nominal (NGDP) (in millions US\$)		4,557.6	4,557.6	4,557.6
RGDP growth (in percent)		5.3	4.6	5.3

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

¹ Non-alcoholic beverages

² 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

The CBL's 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 its bills at tenors of two-weeks, one-month, and three-months at the annual policy rate (MPR) of 20.0 percent.

4.2 Monetary Aggregates

Data on Monetary aggregates at end-March 2024 revealed a month-on-month decrease of 0.2 percent in broad money supply (M2) to L\$227.61 billion, from L\$228.16 billion recorded at the end of the preceding month. The contraction was solely triggered by a 3.5 percent reduction in net domestic assets (NDA) of the banking system. Narrow Money Supply (M1) inched upwards in March 2024 by 0.4 percent, caused by a 1.6 percent growth in demand deposits, while quasi money decreased in the reporting month by 1.8 percent, induced by other deposits.

Additionally, the stock of Liberian dollars in circulation also contracted by 4.9 percent to L\$28.27 billion at end-March 2024, from L\$29.72 billion recorded at the end of the previous month. The downward trend was largely triggered by a 5.5 percent decrease in currency outside banks which outweighed the 0.7 percent growth of currency in banks.

The Liberia dollar component of commercial banks loans to the private sector in March 2024 grew by 1.7 percent to L\$5.59 billion from 5.49 billion in the previous month on account of loans and advances to agriculture, (by 27.9%), others (by 22.0%), manufacturing (by 17.2%) and oil & gas subsectors (by 5.5%).

On the other hand, the US dollars component of commercial banks loans to the private sector decreased by 0.8 percent to US\$451.66 million from US\$455.48 million in the previous month on account of declines in loans and advances to manufacturing (by 14.3%), construction (by 11.9%), oil & gas (by 8.5%) and agriculture subsectors (by 0.7%).

The stock of total deposits converted to Liberian dollars rose by 0.5 percent to L\$202.35 billion (23.0% of GDP) at end March 2024, from 201.42 billion (23.1% of GDP) at end February 2024, largely induced by a 0.1 percent growth in USD dollar deposits. Year-on-year comparison showed total deposits grew by 42.2 percent, influenced mainly by US dollar deposits.

Personal Remittances				
Inflows	72.93	71.98	78.02	82.14
Outflows	5.53	7.62	4.84	6.65
Net flows	67.40	64.36	73.18	75.49
Direction of Trade (DOT)				
Destination of Export	85.7	91.4	77.3	83.4
Africa	2.6	0.2	0.6	3.1
o/w ECOWAS	2.5	0.2	0.2	2.8
o/w Neighboring Countries	0.1	0.2	0.1	2.7
Asia	7.9	3.8	6.6	3.4
o/w The Middle East	4.5	2.9	1.3	1.2
o/w United Arab Emirate	3.6	2.4	0.7	0.8
then China	-	0.2	0.0	0.2
Europe	71.6	82.2	66.9	73.0
o/w Euro Zone	4.0	7.1	0.9	5.1
o/w The United Kingdom	4.0	7.1	0.9	5.1
Switzerland	42.6	67.6	50.8	53.9
North America & The Caribbean	3.5	5.2	3.2	3.9
o/w USA	3.5	5.2	3.2	3.9
Sources of Import (cif)	156.70	238.73	151.58	88.01
Africa	53.65	87.01	40.97	12.76
o/w ECOWAS	46.95	79.26	33.01	3.08
o/w Neighboring Countries	47.82	79.82	33.78	3.88
o/w Cote D Ivoire	44.35	77.78	32.21	-
Asia	77.34	121.18	81.20	48.61
o/w The Middle East	7.04	8.61	5.39	3.47
o/w United Arab Emirate	4.71	2.36	1.91	1.74
o/w China	23.35	56.76	41.15	23.95
o/w India	26.15	39.34	19.18	10.11
Europe	16.98	16.98	17.51	14.43
o/w Europe Zone	12.43	13.55	14.51	12.09
o/w The United Kingdom	2.63	1.47	1.28	2.11
o/w Spain	2.91	1.11	2.69	1.36
North America & The Caribbean	5.17	7.94	5.42	7.27
o/w USA	4.79	6.42	4.06	6.43
South & Central America	3.40	5.37	6.14	4.67
o/w Brazil	2.74	3.67	5.67	2.87
o/w Argentina	0.27	0.92	0.05	0.54
Oceania	0.15	0.25	0.34	0.26
o/w Australia	0.11	0.18	0.25	0.17

Source: CBL

Table 6: External Sector Statistics
January & November – December 2023; & January 2024

External Trade (Value)	Mar-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
	(Millions of US\$; Except Otherwise Indicated)			
Exports ¹	88.41	91.42	77.27	86.13
Iron Ore	28.07	8.04	8.83	15.33
Rubber	3.77	11.06	10.28	8.06
Gold	42.61	70.01	51.26	54.30
Diamond	2.51	1.23	1.91	1.52
Cocoa Bean	0.04	0.10	1.74	0.62
Palm Oil	0.14	0.04	2.62	0.39
Other Commodities	11.27	0.95	0.63	5.91
Imports (CIF) ^{1†}	156.70	238.73	151.58	88.01
Minerals, Fuel, Lubricants	50.63	83.08	38.11	7.07
o/w Petroleum Products	44.23	79.20	32.21	-
Food and Live Animals (incl. Animal and veg. oil)	38.68	53.98	24.74	19.49
o/w Rice	17.65	35.63	4.77	0.27
Machinery & Transport Equipment	40.40	38.41	51.82	28.52
Manufactured goods classified by materials	13.07	15.26	18.19	16.30
Other categories of imports	13.92	48.00	18.72	16.62
Trade Balance	(45.76)	(147.77)	(74.77)	(1.88)
Total Trade	204.86	330.61	229.31	174.14
External Trade (Volume)				
Rubber (MT)	3,249.84	6,456.17	6,630.61	6,721.67
Iron Ore (MT)	453,312.81	90,002.21	106,977.64	172,042.59
Cocoa Beans (MT)	13.64	21,690.77	313,160.29	87,461.05
Palm Oil (MT)	140.00	44.68	3,104.17	412.63
Gold (Oz)	28,559.00	40,107.53	29,971.33	29,941.74
Diamond (Crt)	10,348.65	4,305.53	7,757.94	3,505.71
Petroleum Products (MT)	15,396	26,966	10,983	-
Rice (MT)	37,722.20	57,466.45	8,036.00	19,574.46
Other Indicators				
Net Foreign Reserves Position	328.7	223.1	222.3	208.1
Import (FOB)	143.15	224.24	140.98	78.46
Gross International Reserves (GIR) ¹	579.98	443.06	444.39	422.18
Import covers (In Month) [†]	3.2	1.7	2.6	3.9

Table 2: Monetary Aggregates Statistics

Monetary Aggregates	Mar-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
	<i>In Millions of LD; Except Otherwise Indicated</i>			
ASSETS				
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	18,291.69	12,255.36	17,432.21	24,243.61
Net Domestic Assets (NDA)	146,764.79	208,033.51	210,723.44	203,369.14
Domestic Credits	211,572.70	303,322.04	292,799.33	302,807.06
Net Claims on Government	111,865.27	149,462.14	160,971.66	154,831.24
Claims on Private Sector	99,707.43	143,337.19	141,835.39	143,980.96
Other Items Net	-64,807.91	-84,765.82	-92,083.62	-95,443.06
LIABILITIES				
Broad money (M2)	165,056.48	220,288.88	228,155.64	227,612.75
Narrow Money (M1)	115,518.86	157,602.28	161,646.82	162,298.95
Liberian Dollars in Circulation	22,793.16	28,016.35	26,732.95	25,257.77
Currency in banks	92,725.71	129,585.93	134,913.88	137,041.18
Currency outside banks	49,537.62	62,686.60	66,508.82	65,313.80
Demand deposits	49,016.78	62,461.08	64,890.76	65,135.80
Quasi Money	520.84	225.51	1,618.06	178.00
Time & Savings deposits	165,056.48	220,288.88	228,155.64	227,612.75
Other deposits	115,518.86	157,602.28	161,646.82	162,298.95
MEMORANDUM				
Broad money (M2) in LRD only	48,243.56	54,202.40	53,718.13	51,821.63
Money Supply (M1) in LRD only	40,877.14	44,704.85	43,896.62	41,894.59
Loans to Private Sector				
Commercial banks loans to private sector- USD	455.36	454.46	455.49	451.66
Commercial banks loans to private sector - LRD	4,974.32	5,520.05	5,495.02	5,589.07
Demand Deposits of commercial banks				
Demand deposits – USD	459.96	594.16	614.57	624.51
Demand deposits – LRD	18,083.98	16,688.51	17,163.67	16,636.83
Time & savings deposits – USD	257.78	279.79	288.63	287.17
Time & savings deposits – LRD	7,185.22	9,298.61	9,588.65	9,769.27
Other Deposits**				
Actual US\$ component of other deposits	2.09	0.14	7.23	0.10
Liberian \$ component of other deposits	181.20	198.94	232.86	157.77
Total Deposits (both USD & LRD) converted to LRD ¹	142,263.32	192,272.53	201,422.70	202,354.98
Liberian Dollar share of Broad Money (% of total Money Supply)	29.2%	24.6%	23.5%	22.8%

‡ - Reserves excluding ECF borrowing from the IMF;

* - estimate/projection

** - Other Deposits Including Official and Manager Checks;

4.3 FINANCIAL MARKET (FM) DEVELOPMENTS

To maintain its stringent policy stance and bolster liquidity management in pursuit of low inflation, the CBL remained steadfast in its commitment, continuing the issuance of CBL bills with short tenors of 2-weeks, 1-month, and 3-months at an effective annual rate of 20.0 percent.

In March 2024, the total issuance of CBL bills amounted to L\$4,452.04 million, reflecting a 14.60 percent decline from the previous month. Commercial banks continued to exhibit robust demand, accounting for 93.13 percent (L\$4,146.00 million) of the total and retail investors' participation constituted L\$306.04 million from L\$99.37 million in the prior month. The decrease in the CBL bill subscriptions was primarily attributed to a liquidity constriction within the banking system stemming from reduced deposit balances at commercial banks. As a result of this, the CBL injected approximately L\$979.98 million, bolstering Liberian dollar liquidity during the review period. Consequently, total redemptions amounted to L\$5,432.02 million, leading to an 11.21 percent reduction in outstanding CBL bills to L\$7,754.60 million compared to the previous month. The Bank upheld its commitment to timely redemption and provided regular updates on its website.

No new treasury securities were issued during the month, maintaining the total stock of Liberian Dollar (LRD) treasury securities at L\$8,277.30 million and USD treasury securities at US\$3.01 million.

Lending rates, average savings, and time deposit rates remained unchanged at 12.4 percent, 2.1 percent, and 3.5 percent, respectively. However, money market instruments such as repos were not traded. In interbank operations, commercial banks continued to engage exclusively in non-interest-bearing swaps as part of a strategic effort to mitigate liquidity disparities, particularly concerning international and intra-country transactions.

o/w Payments on Loans, interest & other charges	3.29	1.63	3.03	5.25	73.64
Capital Expenditure	6.95	-	-	0.02	
Overall Balance (Surplus+; Deficit -)	(6.50)	22.40	31.82	9.03	
Total Debt Stock	2,029.12	2,400.00	2,412.14	2,413.12	0.04
Domestic Debt	883.57	1,018.36	1,018.36	1,018.36	-
o/w Financial Institutions	826.64	884.92	884.92	884.92	-
o/w Other Debts	56.93	133.44	133.44	133.44	-
External Debt	1,145.54	1,381.64	1,393.78	1,394.76	0.07
o/w Multilateral	1,033.40	1,259.36	1,262.10	1,263.09	0.08
o/w Bilateral	112.14	115.42	115.42	115.42	-
Memo Items					
Government Revenue (% of GDP)	1.18	1.07	1.30	1.13	-
Government Expenditure (% of GDP)	1.33	0.58	0.60	0.94	-
Total Debt Stock (% of GDP)	46.84	52.66	52.93	52.95	-
NGDP (at Level)	4,331.56	4,557.56	4,557.56	4,557.56	-

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 significantly by 97.5 percent in March 2024, from the deficit recorded in February, as total trade similarly declined by 23.9 percent. Trade deficit fell to US\$1.88 million (0.04 percent of GDP), from US\$74.31 million (1.7 percent of GDP), on account of a significant decline in imports as exports increased during the period. Total merchandise trade decreased to US\$174.14 million (4.0 percent of GDP), from US\$228.85 million (5.3 percent of GDP), due to a huge decrease in payments for imports.

Export earnings increased by 11.5 percent to US\$86.13 million (1.9 percent of GDP) in March 2024, from US\$77.27 million (1.8 percent of GDP) in February, led by increase receipts from gold and iron ore. Payments for merchandise imports declined by 41.9 percent to US\$88.01 million (2.0 percent of GDP), from US\$151.58 million (3.5 percent of GDP) recorded in February occasioned by a significant decline in import payments, mainly petroleum products and machinery & transport equipment.

Total government expenditure, in contrast, expanded, substantially increasing by more than half to US\$42.7 million (0.9 percent of GDP) relative to US\$27.5 million (0.6 percent of GDP) expended in the previous month. The increase in government expenditure was primarily due to an increase in recurrent expenditure. Government recurrent expenditure for the month totaled US\$42.6 million (0.9 percent of GDP), increasing by 55.1 percent. The increase was attributed to growths in employees' compensation (by 31.9 percent to US\$22.5 million), goods & services spending (by more than onefold to US\$9.2 million), and payments on loans, interest & other charges (by more than half to US\$5.3 million). In addition, during the reporting month, spending on capital goods was less than US\$1.0 million.

5.2 Total Public Debt

A review of the GOL's debt portfolio showed a slight increase in the public debt, expanding to US\$2,413.1 million (53.0 percent of GDP). The marginal increase reflects a 0.1 percent rise in external debt. Thus, the stock of external and domestic debts totaled US\$1,394.8 million (30.6 percent of GDP) and US\$1,018.4 million (22.3 percent of GDP), respectively, at end-March 2024.

Table 5. GOL's Fiscal Operations Statistics

Fiscal Operations	Mar-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	M-O-M
	(Millions of USD)				(% Change)
Government Revenue	50.92	48.79	59.32	51.68	(12.87)
Tax Revenue	39.68	42.31	47.90	40.60	(15.23)
o/w Taxes on Income & Profits	18.83	18.10	18.45	16.21	(12.11)
o/w Taxes on International Trade (Customs)	14.16	17.58	19.41	18.93	(2.47)
Non-tax Revenue	11.24	6.48	11.42	11.08	(2.95)
o/w Property Income	9.33	4.91	9.49	4.76	(49.89)
o/w Administrative Fees & Penalties	1.91	1.57	1.93	6.33	228.30
Other Revenue (Including Grants)	-	-	-	-	
Government Expenditure	57.42	26.39	27.49	42.66	55.15
Recurrent Expenditure	50.47	26.39	27.49	42.64	55.09
o/w Compensation	16.74	18.85	17.07	22.50	31.85
o/w Goods and Services	22.36	1.22	3.24	9.18	183.34

Table 3: Financial Market and Interest Rates Statistics

Market Instruments (CBL indexed Bills)	March-23	January-24	February-24	March-24
	<i>(In Millions of Liberian Dollar)</i>			
Bills Purchased per month on coupon basis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Redemption during the month (coupon rate)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bills (Index) outstanding on coupon basis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Coupon rate on Index Bill (in %)	Na	Na	Na	Na
Bills Purchased per month on EAR basis	7,704.78	6,575.89	5,213.37	4,452.04
Redemption during the month (EAR basis)	7,025.92	4,755.43	5,862.25	5,432.02
Bill Outstanding (EAR basis)	8,300.00	9,383.47	8,734.59	7,754.60
Effective Annual Rate (EAR)	15.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Total Purchases (coupon rate & EAR)	7,704.78	6,575.89	5,213.37	4,452.04
Total Redemption (coupon rate & EAR)	7,025.92	4,755.43	5,862.25	5,432.02
Total Outstanding Bills (coupon rate & EAR)	8,300.00	9,383.47	8,734.59	7,754.60
CBL Foreign Exchange Auction¹	<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
Over (+)/ Under (-) Subscription	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Securities	<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)	290.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
T-Bills Outstanding	8,247.60	3,642.67	3,642.67	3,642.67
T-Bills Total Stock		8,277.30	8,277.30	8,277.30
Net Treasury Bills Operations[^] withdrawal (+)/Injection (-)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate (T-Bills)	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
T- Bills Issued (In USD)	2.00	0.00	0.00	
T- Bills Redeemed (Principal or Interest) (In USD)	1.38	0.00	0.00	
T-Bills Outstanding (Repayment principal and interest)	110.82	1.28	3.01	3.01
Ave. Weighted Discount Rate (T-Bills)	112.82	143.17	143.17	143.17
Treasury Bond Issued (in LD for 2 years)	0.00	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	8,246.47	8,246.47	8,246.47
Early Redemption	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Coupon rate (%)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Bond Issued (USD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Bond Principal Payment	0.71	0.00	0.00	0.00
Treasury Bond Outstanding (In USD) (Coupon and Principal)	47.41	36.33	36.33	36.33
Coupon Payments (USD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total debt stock	47.41	36.33	36.33	36.33
	<i>(As specified)</i>			
SCF rate	17.5	20.0	20.0	20.0
SCF Amount (In Millions LD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SDF overnight rate	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00
SDF Amount (In Millions LD)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Interest Rates</i>		<i>(As specified)</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	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Swap lending	0.00	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 remained in compliance with the sector's regulatory requirements. For the month ended March 2024, the industry liquidity ratio increased by 2.50 percentage points to 45.32 percent from 42.82 when compared to the liquidity ratio reported in February 2024. For the period under review, the industry liquidity ratio remained above the minimum regulatory requirement of 15.0 percent. The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) decreased by 4.32 percentage points to 24.30 percent when compared to 28.62 percent for the previous month. The CAR, however, remained above the minimum regulatory requirement of 10.0 percent by 14.30 percentage points. In addition, the Return on Assets (ROA) increased by 0.26 percentage points to 0.87 percent from 0.61 percent, and the Return on Equity (ROE) increased by 1.91 percentage points to 6.31 percent from 4.40 percent.

Gross loans increased by 0.20 percent to L\$94.46 billion in March 2024, from L\$94.27 billion reported in the previous month. The increase in total loans was mainly attributed to increases in facilities that were granted in the Personal Sector (7.31 percent) and the Public Corporation Sector (5.36 percent). On the other hand, the ratio of non-performing loans to total loans decreased by 1.91 percentage points to 15.49 percent during the month under review against the 10.0 percent regulatory tolerable limit. The decrease in NPLs is largely the result of the decrease in defaulted facilities in the Construction and Personal sector.

Table 4: Selected Financial Soundness Indicators (FSIs)

Financial Soundness Indicators	March-23	January-24	February-24	March-24
	<i>(In Billions of Liberian Dollar)</i>			
Total Gross Loans	79.33	93.46	94.27	94.46
Total Non-performing Loans	12.83	17.64	16.41	14.61
Non-performing Loans to Total Gross Loans (ratio)	16.17	18.87	17.40	15.49
Gross Loan (percent change)	2.24	0.67	0.86	0.20
Non-performing Loans (percent change)	4.77	0.81	(6.97)	(10.96)
Returns on Assets (ROA)	0.48	0.29	0.61	0.87
Returns on Equity (ROE)	3.59	2.12	4.40	6.31
Liquidity Ratio***	44.55	42.98	42.82	45.32
Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)****	21.69	28.14	28.62	24.30

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

Preliminary statistics on the Government of Liberia's (GOL) fiscal operations revealed a surplus in the overall balance (OB), amounting to US\$9.0 million (0.2 percent of GDP). Although GoL revenue declined, the reduction in revenue was still sufficient to outweigh the rise in government expenditure, consequently, resulting in a surplus.

The fiscal operations showed that government total revenue reduced by 12.9 percent to US\$51.7 million (1.1 percent of GDP) compared to the US\$59.3 million (1.3 percent of GDP) mobilized in the preceding month. The reduction was attributed to decreases in tax and non-tax revenues, decreasing by 15.2 percent and 3.0 percent to US\$40.6 million (0.9 percent of GDP) and US\$11.1 million (0.2 percent of GDP), respectively. The decrease in tax revenue was predominantly driven by a nosedive in income & profit tax and international trade tax while the decline in non-tax revenue was ascribed to a reduction in property income.