

The Transport Ministry, under the administration of Angela Bush-Cassell has made tremendous successes over the last 11 months, accomplishing benchmark goals as part of its statutory mandate of creating the enabling environment for the growth and development of the transportation system.

Transport Minister Angela Bush-Cassell, who has led the ministry since August 2014 is the longest serving in this position in the Johnson Sirleaf government, told reporters her administration had not only been focused on ensuring safety, efficiency and reliability in the transport sector but also ensuring full compliance with laws governing the sector and collecting government's rightful revenue.

Minister Bush -Cassell named some the achievements as increased revenue generation and support to the national budget, successful review and amendment of the Act of the legislature creating the Ministry among others.

In an interview with reporters, she attributed the progress to employees of the entity couple with support and collaboration with other line ministries and agencies among others.

It was barely two days after her interaction with reporters that the Minister was replaced with National Housing Authority Managing Director Sam Wlue and reassigned as Ambassador.

### **Increased Revenue Support to National Budget**

During the period from January 2016 to present the Ministry generated total revenue of US\$5,532,146.

This shows a significant increase in revenue generation during the period, raising US\$1.6 million more than the initial target of US\$3.8 million.

This huge support to the 2015/2016 fiscal budget by the Ministry only came as a result of the stern mechanisms put in place to ensure no one robs government of its needed revenue.

### **Reforms**

Minister Bush -Cassell said in an attempt to ensure efficiency and effectiveness at the ministry, her administration embarked on a number of reforms and institution of systems.

One of such reforms was the need to amend the 1975 Act of the Legislature creating the Ministry, to enable the institution meet contemporary realities, by reviewing its statutory mandates.

Minister Bush -Cassell explained that through consultations with the Governance Commission, Law Reform Commission a new MOT Draft Act has been formulated pending legislative enactment. "This review was intended to reflect the present day reality of the Ministry and to realign its core functions as a policy driven entity," she stated.

In addition, the enactment the Axle Load Law by the legislature was one other accomplishment the outgoing Transport Minister mentioned, stressing it was important to put measures in place to protect the investments being made in roads infrastructure.

According her, the Liberian Senate concurred with the House of Representatives on the passage of the Axle Load Law September 22, 2015, and the Axle Load Regulation was approved on August 1, 2016.

This Regulation was issued under the Authority of the MOT in compliance with and in order to give effect of the Axle Load Law of 2015 and the ECOWAS Supplementary Agreement of 2012.

She said public awareness campaign in road usage and training and other capacity building activities were underway following a validation workshop of the implementation strategy of the regulation recently. he forum was organized by the Ministry in close collaboration with its German partner GiZ.

The Ministry of Transport in April, 2016 officially relocated its offices from the Parker Building on Broad Street to its current location on Carey and Warren streets in the previous CBL building.

This move created the platform for a one stop shop that now accommodates the LRA, International Bank and the CBL to facilitate and fast track registration of all transport related businesses.

Also, the Ministry now has a vault in which all instruments are safely secured. The Minister of Transport told reporters that the move has since help government save huge sums of money pay in rent to owners of the private building housing the Ministry.

## **Vehicle Registration**

Ensuring full registration of vehicles and that operators have the requisite documents including license to ply the streets with in Liberia is not just an issue of safety but of law.

It was increasingly becoming out of hand, that many vehicles were without license plates, but she said through various interventions the situation has been brought under control.

The entire system and procedure in acquiring registration documents for vehicles and driver's license were overhauled.

This reduced the time taken to get a drivers' license and processes in accessing such services more simple.

One of such interventions was the Car Dealership Regulation, which came into effect October 1, 2016 seeks to ensure all vehicles sold are fully registered and insured before leaving their respective premises.

Other administrative regulations including the Road Worthiness Inspection regulation among others were also approved and currently being implemented.

A vigorous inspection exercise was launched Tuesday, November 8, by Minister Bush -Cassell in collaboration with the Liberia National Police.

The exercise which took place on the Somalia Drive also sets out to remove abandoned vehicles from the streets to improve safety and ensure compliance.

At the same time, the Ministry of Transport signed an MOU with a private company for the installation and management of weigh bridges in Liberia.

Three separate sites namely Buchanan, Klay and Zeansue have been identified and validated for possible installation.

Geographical assessment and identification of a company to commence civil works is underway.

## **Decentralization**

As part of government's commitment to take services to the people, deconcentrating public services from Monrovia, the Transport Minister has made remarkable leaps.

This was done with the help of the Deconcentration program, a component of the National Decentralization Plan, which involves the construction of County Service Centers where various government services are being offered in the counties.

Today, Transport services including the issuance of driver's license, vehicle registration document among others are currently offered in three of Liberia's fifteen counties namely Kakata-Margibi County, Buchanan-Grand Bassa County, and Gbarnga-Bong County.

The official opening of the Ministry's window at the Buchanan Service Center as well as the Kakata Service Center was commissioned on September 15, 2016 at the Service Center in Kakata, Margibi County.

At these windows, all transport related services, similar to those services currently being offered in Monrovia including driver licenses, vehicle registration, eligibility certificates are now being moved to the county Service Centers.

Minister Cassell Bush said: "This brings real and tangible improvements and further improves the quality and access to transport related services that are offered by the Ministry in its Monrovia office."

Towards the end of this current quarter, a similar drive will be launched in Gbarnga and subsequently in Buchanan as well as the rest of the counties when applicable.

### **Early Warning System**

Liberia is well on course to getting meteoroidal stations to forecast the weather locally. This is under the Early Warning System Project.

Minister Bush -Cassell told reporters that the initiative, in order to work well needed trained human resource capacity, adding that her administration ensure the dispatch of a batch of fifty civil servants from the relevant Ministries and Agencies to Nigeria where they are currently undergoing meteorology and hydrology training at the Nigeria Meteorological Center in Abuja.

The Ministries are Transport, Lands and Mines, Agriculture and the Liberia Airport Authority.

According to her, the goal of this training is to prepare these civil servants to take the lead in the establishment of a National Meteorological Center (NMC) in Liberia.

"The NMC will strengthen Liberia's capacity to monitor, forecast, analyze and communicate hydro-meteorological data and climate information," she said with optimism that a center would be established during the year in 2017.

Minister Bush-Cassell said seventeen weather stations will be hosted across Monrovia during this period. The Early Warning System Project is being financed through a Global Environment Fund Project valued at a total of USD6.7M.

### **Regional and International Contribution**

In contribution to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Minister attended the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) World Aviation Forum (IWAF 2016) General Assembly held in Montréal, Canada.

It was aimed at promoting the role of aviation in fostering economic development and growth by identifying needs, facilitating financing, fostering partnerships and sharing information.

The forum also endeavored to ensure best practices with a view to accelerating the implementation of international civil aviation global standards and policies in support of the ICAO No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative.

Liberia's outgoing Transport Minister, representing Liberia, chaired a one day Ministerial Council Meeting of Ministers of Transport in Lomé, Togo.

The gathering sought to establish a coastal transport system amongst ECOWAS Member States that will be an alternative transportation solution to the already challenged road transport system for the effective implementation of ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), which was formulated in 1975 and revised in 1993.

To build on the gains made in 2016, the Ministry of Transport objectives in 2017 were to fast-track the establishment of structures, mobilize resources to support its activities and coordinate the implementation of the National Transport Policy & Strategy and the National Transport Master Plan Implementation Coordination Committee (NTPS/NTMP), which will ultimately improve coordination amongst transport sector stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the President of the Republic of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has nominated Hon. Samuel B. Wlue as Minister of Transport Designate pending confirmation by the Liberian Senate.