

ACCESSION OF LIBERIA TO THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

**STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM
16 DECEMBER 2015**

I warmly welcome Liberia to the WTO community. It has been a difficult journey but one that is clearly worthwhile.

This is a great achievement for Liberia and for its government under the leadership of President Johnson-Sirleaf.

It is barely a decade since Liberia emerged from the dark period of civil war.

The war not only shattered people's lives and caused immense suffering, but it also severely impacted Liberia's economy, devastating the country's infrastructure and its export economy – which has historically generated much of the country's growth.

Economic mismanagement before and during those years had led to a crippling debt burden and, in 2003, suspension from the IMF. But those days are now behind Liberia.

Its relations with international financial institutions have improved dramatically.

The debt relief Liberia secured in 2010 was a historic achievement.

These economic achievements have now been crowned by access to the WTO.

Economic integration has proven to be a key ingredient of development in economies across the world.

I'm confident that Liberia will reap the benefits that come with WTO membership and we stand ready to support this bilaterally and multilaterally.

Liberia's accession is important also as an indication of faith in a strong multilateral rules-based trading system that has the WTO at its core.

I am heartened to see that so many other countries, including least developed countries, are keen to move towards accession in the future.

With this accession and with the agreement that I hope we will reach this week, we will leave Nairobi with a renewed commitment to global growth and development and with a WTO fit-for-purpose to deliver this.