

FLAGSHIP

NEWS FROM THE LIBERIAN REGISTRY

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Register achieves record numbers as Liberia builds on stability

The Liberian Registry today is bigger and better than at any time in its history, under any management. Its spectacular growth continues on a day-by-day basis, as does the positive international reputation of the Liberian administration, headed by its President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

When Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf came to power in January 2006, she committed herself to securing the country's recovery after years of unrest. That recovery is now well under way, helped by support and assistance from the international community and the United Nations. The President says that Liberia has made an important beginning in the face of "monumental challenges", and that "Liberians have laid the foundation for full recovery and reconstruction for peace, security and healing and restoring Liberia to sustained prosperity".

Programmes have been implemented to reduce poverty across the nation, to reform and strengthen the country's economic management system, and to rebuild critical infrastructures. Liberia is making an all-out effort to regain the confidence of investors.

International confidence in Liberia's future was further boosted in February this year, when George W Bush became the first sitting president of the United States to visit Liberia in thirty years, where he was welcomed by Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf.



US president George W Bush with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia

During the course of his visit, President Bush said in a speech, "It is easier to tear a country down than it is to rebuild a country. And the people of the United States understand that this country will stand with you as you rebuild".

Evidence of foreign investment and confidence in Liberia's future can also be seen in the reopening of the American International School and return of the Peace Corps, both sending a strong message of US confidence in the Liberian administration's deft diplomacy and hard work. Additionally, the US president has committed to continue the close relationship that Liberia has enjoyed over the last several decades and which is evidenced in structural and development aid.

Revenues from the ship registry have also helped speed the pace of recovery in Liberia, while Liberia's growing international acceptance by the international community further supports the well established quality image of Liberia's ship registry.

Confidence in Liberia is also evident in other traditional shipowning centres. In Japan, for example, shipowners now see a good business environment in Liberia, with clear economic advantages. Registration of Japanese vessels with the registry is now on the increase, and many more owners in Japan are currently reviewing the services of the registry, with a view to placing vessels under the Liberian flag.

Yoram Cohen, Chief Executive Officer of LISCR, says, "The Liberian Registry is a heritage of the Liberian people. It is a critical part of Liberia's future, and we are happy to be able to report that the registry is approaching its sixty-year anniversary bigger and stronger than at any point in its history. This major achievement is testament to the faith which owners and operators have in our commitment to safety and commercial excellence, the rapid-response approach to customer service by our dedicated professional staff, and our use of technology to do the job better, faster and more accurately. And that is good news for the registry, for shipping generally, and for Liberia."

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MONROVIA SYMPOSIUM

Contract renegotiation welcomed by LISCR and Liberia

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has paid tribute to the manner in which LISCR has managed the Liberian Registry, and says she has no wish to disturb the arrangement.

During her keynote address to the LISCR Symposium held at the

international flag for quality and meaningful shipowners”.

Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said, “It is pleasing to note that the Liberian fleet is known for quality, and that the country is among the top-ranking flags with respect to minimum

success of the registry, Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf said that the symposium was an example of the maritime programme “being taken to the people, informing them about their own enterprise”. She added that Liberia wanted to renegotiate the contract for the management of the registry with LISCR to ensure that the national interest was fully protected, and that resources were allocated in the interests of the people. But she said she did not want to disturb the agreement, “which is working”.

In his introductory remarks to the symposium, LISCR CEO Yoram Cohen noted, “At a time when the country was being threatened with sanctions, LISCR ran the programme and kept the Liberian flag afloat”. He also disclosed that LISCR was looking forward to the renegotiation of the agreement with the government.

Joseph Keller, General Manager and Executive Vic-President of LISCR, meanwhile told the symposium that the improved security and political stability in Liberia would produce an increase in revenues in the coming years.



Liberia President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is pictured with LISCR managers at the symposium in Monrovia

Monrovia City Hall at the end of February, the Liberian President said that, over a number of years, the maritime programme run by LISCR had “been able to build a place where today one can say that the Liberian Registry is the leading

casualties as measured by underwriters and safety agencies throughout the world”. The president attributed this chiefly to the level of professionalism that has prevailed over the years at LISCR. Commending all those who had contributed to the

Looking for fairness on labour agreements

In February, the Liberian Registry was invited to participate in the second meeting of the International Labour Organisation Flag State Working Group on the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006). The meeting was the second for the group of experts, which was selected by the ILO to help formulate draft guidelines for use by member states in implementing MLC 2006. The tripartite meeting’s discussions were thoughtful, constructive, and productive. The draft guidelines will be discussed in September by the ILO.

Liberia’s focus has been to simplify international agreements, to maintain an active and verifiable enforcement programme, and to ensure that the system creates a level playing field and makes a positive impact on safety, health, and the environment.

LISCR appoints new general managers for its office in Hamburg

LISCR has appointed Julia Müller and Jörg Molzahn as General Managers of its Hamburg-based office.

Julia Müller has been with the registry since the opening of its first office in Germany. As the manager for maritime services and as a special agent, she was responsible for the registration and crewing department.

Jörg Molzahn - a former superintendent in the maritime industry – has been Maritime

Operations Manager for the Liberian Registry in Hamburg since 2006.

Julia Müller says, “We are looking forward to taking on the challenge of continuing the success of Dr Albrecht Gundermann, former general manager of LISCR’s Hamburg office, who presided over the emergence of Liberia as the largest registry in Germany in terms of tonnage.”

Jörg Molzahn adds, “Maintaining well-established business relations, and keeping and improving the standard of service for our German-based clients, will be our major target.”



LISCR launches new website

There is a new, modern look to LISCR's website, and it is not just confined to aesthetics. LISCR recognises that, for many people, the website may be the first point of contact with the registry. And, for many others, it will remain the most frequent means of communication, as it is now possible to access so much information – and so many LISCR services – online.

LISCR has ensured that its new site is easy to navigate, and it has endeavoured to include all the services which its users are likely to need.

For example, you can click on the Customer Care link, and leave compliments or complaints for LISCR. We prefer the former to the latter, but we can promise you a quick

response, whatever the nature of your communication. You can also enquire here about job opportunities. We are committed to continually improving our Customer Service, and your comments will help us to do this. You can also use the website to, among other things, verify documents, calculate prices, and access payment details. Take a look, and let us know what you think.

www.liscr.com

Liberia participates at STW 39

During the 39th meeting of the IMO Standards of Training and Watchkeeping subcommittee in London recently, Liberia supported several initiatives directly related to seafarer training and competence. Liberia's emphasis is on ensuring that seafarers receive relevant training and are afforded the time necessary

to establish an onboard personal experience baseline.

Liberia's delegation also actively participated in the minimum safe manning discussions – proposing the use of an innovative web-based application for evaluating seafarers' onboard alertness and attentiveness performance levels based on individually created baseline models. Both alertness and attentiveness

are directly related to a person's level of fatigue.

The web-based application quickly establishes an individual's baseline performance levels. Once on board, the application then compares that baseline (rested) performance to the individual's onboard performance. The application is currently being used in high-risk industries and is also being piloted with a crewing agency.

Norway reaches accord with Liberian registry

The Norwegian Shipowners' Association (NSA) has lifted its recommendation not to use the Liberian ship registry, which had been in effect since 2001, citing "the positive developments in Liberia, the position of the UN and the Norwegian authorities, and the increased transparency concerning financial transactions between the registry and the Liberian authorities."

In late 2001, the NSA recommended its members not to use the Liberian registry until the country "answered

the UN's call for increased transparency surrounding cashflows from the country". In addition, the NSA noted at that time that "the UN Security Council has adopted a number of resolutions on the situation in Liberia ..."

The NSA says, "The Norwegian authorities have now recognised the positive developments in Liberia, not least by upgrading the Norwegian diplomatic presence in the country, cancellation of debts and providing assistance for reconstruction. On this basis, and because the Liberian

registry has met the requirements of increased transparency concerning financial transactions between the registry and the Liberian government, the board of the NSA has found it appropriate to lift the recommendation to its members not to use the Liberian ship registry."

Scott Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer of LISCR, says, "We welcome this decision by the Norwegian Shipowners' Association. The Liberian registry is a natural home for all quality owners, and we are confident that its continued, planned growth will be bolstered still further by this decision from Norway."



Pictured is the 10,424 gt "Baltic Melody" a Liberian reefer ship managed by Aquaship Ltd for the Rivera Group



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On the register

Sonia Mohamed has been with LISCR from the start. And she has no intention of running away any time soon, despite her confirmed prowess at marathon running and speed walking.

Sonia joined LISCR's New York office in 2000, having spent the previous eighteen years working as a legal assistant for a New York law firm. She says she "wanted a change", and that's what she got.



Sonia enjoys her work at LISCR, where she is a mortgage co-ordinator. "There is an enormous amount of paperwork," she says, "and the workload has increased tremendously in the past couple of years as the registry has gone from success to success."

It is Sonia's job to deal with mortgage filings, recordings and post-closing documents, to make sure that they are in order, and to see that a copy of all relevant documents goes to the right people. Sonia also reviews and pre-clears mortgage documents with clients and participates in night and early morning closings. She says, "It is a very busy office. There is never a time when you have nothing to do."

When she is not in the office, Sonia finds plenty of time to do the things she loves. She lives in the Bronx, and has a son at college and working part-time. She is currently in training for her fourth New York City Marathon, for which she has already been accepted. She trains in Central Park, after work and at weekends. She also belongs to a runner's club and a speed walking club, and regularly competes in races in the city.

Sonia enjoys playing acoustic/electric guitar. Having studied it at college, she has now reached advanced level, and continues to study and play at home. Her favourites are folk and country, but she also confesses to dabbling in a little Bob Marley.

Sonia's tastes also run to dancing, the movies, and live theatre. Her other great love is travelling, and she makes an annual trip to Egypt to see her in-laws. They want her to visit more often, but there is work to be done.

