

Liberia electricity

Formal electricity services are solely provided by the state-owned Liberia Electricity Corporation, which operates a small grid almost exclusively in the Greater Monrovia District. The vast majority of electric energy services is provided by small privately owned generators. At \$0.54 per kWh, the electricity tariff in Liberia is among the highest in the world. Total installed capacity in 2013 was 20 MW, a sharp decline from a peak of 191 MW in 1989;

Completion of the repair and expansion of the Mount Coffee Hydropower Plant, with a maximum capacity of 80 MW, is scheduled to be completed by 2018; while construction of three new heavy fuel oil power plants is expected to boost electrical capacity by 38 MW. In 2013, Liberia began importing power from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea through the West African Power Pool;

MONROVIA As the supply of cheap, stable and affordable electricity remains a challenge in post-conflict Liberia, the underfire Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) Monie Captan has recommended the purchasing of electricity from any source as one of the best ways forward to address the situation.

Despite the expenditure of nearly a billion United States dollars to revive Liberia's shattered energy sector that was destroyed as a result of the 14 years civil conflict, the supply of stable electricity remains far from coming to fruition.

This makes the LEC, the public utility corporation responsible to ensure the generation, supply and transmission of electricity to households and businesses, the most heavily criticized public service delivery entity in the country.

The situation has claimed the attention of members of the Senate Committee on Lands, Mines, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment headed by Grand Cape Mount County Senator Simeon Taylor.

Speaking when he appeared for public hearing before the committee at the Capitol Building on Monday, March 18, Mr. Captan admitted that Liberia is currently faced with an "energy crisis."

He justified that the current management team of the corporation cannot be held liable for the current inadequate supply of electricity to households and businesses in the country.

Mr. Captan, who appeared very emotional during the hearing, stated that any country that fails to invest in its energy infrastructure development will face similar problem Liberia and its citizens are experiencing.

He maintained that value for money will not be realized when investment in the energy sector commences on an emergency level, as the government remains the only shareholder of the LEC.

"If we want to solve this problem (of poor electricity supply) now, the best solution is we have to buy electricity from whoever has it to sell. But the question is what are the terms and can be accept or afford the terms? Public investment in electrification is not the responsibility of the utility or management; that's the responsibility of the government."

Justifying his dual roles as Board Chair and CEO of the LEC, Mr. Captan claimed that the management of the corporation has been contracted dating as far back as the administration of former Liberian President William R. Tolbert.

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