

Millennium Challenge Account Liberia Boosts Electricity Regulator's Capacity with US\$193,000 in Vehicles and Equipment



(L to R) LERC Commissioner Thomas Q. Harris, MCA-L CEO Monie R. Captan, who's presenting the keys of the vehicles to LERC Chair J. Aloysius Tarlue, as LERC Commissioner Togar Nimely, MCC Deputy Resident Country Director Kevin George, and LERC Executive Director Gus Goanue look on

Monrovia – The Millennium Challenge Account Liberia (MCA-L) has equipped the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission (LERC) with vehicles and office materials worth over US\$193,000, as part of ongoing support to stand up the regulator.

At a turnover ceremony on September 10, MCA-L presented to the LERC, a range of equipment including a video-conferencing system, printers, laptops, presentation screens, along with three Ford Everest utility vehicles.

LERC was created through the Electricity Law of 2015 to license electricity suppliers, including the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC).

MCA-L's Chief Executive Officer, Monie Captan, who presented the items to Hon. J. Aloysius Tarlue, Jr., Chairman of LERC, said MCA-L is committed to ensuring that LERC has the capacity to deliver on the objectives of the Electricity Law.

“For many years, we've gone without an effective regulator,” Captan said. He contrasted the electricity sector with the much more advanced telecommunications sector, which has several players and is more strongly regulated.

“We would like to see the same happen for the electricity sector, where we will one day have other service providers in addition to LEC, providing effective, efficient services to the Liberian public and we'll be able to meet the growth in demand over the years – and a lot of that depends on the work you do at the Electricity Regulatory Commission.”

A key goal of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact for Liberia is to promote economic growth through access to reliable and affordable electricity.

As part of its mandate, LERC will also establish, monitor, and enforce safety standards related to electricity supply and use. The agency will regulate the electricity industry and market participants in the areas of generation, transmission, system operation, distribution, import and export, and trading in electricity.

MCC Deputy Resident Country Director, Kevin George called LERC a “steward of the electricity sector.”

“You're there to make sure that the utility and the providers are productive and effective,” he told the LERC employees. “But you're also there to look out for the interest of the businessman and the ordinary Liberians who seek good access to electricity. And I know that's not an easy road, but with LERC present and doing its job, I believe it's not too far in the distant future when it's no longer a binding constraint on the economy.”

In his brief remarks, Chairman Tarlue thanked MCA-L, MCC, and the American people, “whose taxes have been working here for the cause of Africa.”

He recounted the support MCC and MCA-L had provided to LERC, including providing the agency with office space, recruitment of key staff, and supporting a recently completed national operator census, which aimed to create a database of electricity providers operating across the country that will allow LERC to determine the specifics of its regulations.