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# “Huge Untapped Potentials”

*Minister Piah Describes Liberia’s Tourism Sector*



*Minister Jerolinmek Matthew Piah*

**By Jackson C. Clay, Jr.**

The Minister of  
Information Cultural Affairs  
and Tourism (MICAT),

Jerolinmek Matthew Piah has observed that Liberia has a huge untapped potential within the ecotourism sector.

Speaking over the weekend in Nimba County during the launch of the Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve, Minister Piah said Liberia holds 40% of the Upper Guinea Forest, one of the third lungs of the world with amazing wildlife and forest resources.

“Exactly one month and four days ago, the Liberian tourism sector, with the support of United States Agency for International Development (USAID), received a big boost the official opening of the Wakorlor Ecolodge and Jungle Reserve in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County,” Minister Piah noted.

Minister Piah stated that tourism development remains one of the six cardinal pillars of the Joseph Nyuma Boakai led government's national development for the next six years.

The MICAT boss named Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education and Sanitation among others as some of the earmarked areas this government intends to improve over the next six

years of the first term of President Jospeh Nyuma Boakai.

Minister Piah said “as it is already known, and the government’s commitment in establishing the Liberia National Tourism Authority remains on course with the bill already submitted to the Legislature. The passage of the bill will be the moment that will lead the way for tangibles tourism progress.”

Minister Piah further observed that “the private stakeholders are increasingly engaged for its speedy passage and President Boakai is prioritizing the LNTA as one of the key deliverables of his legislative agenda for 2024. hope is insight for tourism development.”

Minister Piah expressed sincere gratitude and profound appreciations to the

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the support in developing Liberia's tourism sector.

Minister Piah indicated that the launch of the Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve is among the countless success stories of the USAID impactful support to Liberia throughout the years of partnership with the government and people of Liberia in several areas

including agriculture, democratic governance, energy, the economy, health care, rule of law, among others.

He noted that the Government of Liberia remains grateful to the United States for leading the charge in investing in conservation works that will according to him boom Liberia's ecotourism through support to the Liberian private sector.



For his part, Mr. Jim Wright, Mission Director of USAID-Liberia stated “Leveraging the private sector to boost ecotourism and safeguard natural resources is a critical component of the US government strategy in Liberia”.

Mr. Wright noted that USAID’s investment of US\$ 350,000 leveraged US\$ 620,000 in private capital and

will promote ecotourism and the conservation of East Nimba Nature Reserve spanning on 13,000 hectares.

Meanwhile, Minister Piah asserted that as the US government is supporting the private sector for sustainable ecotourism development, the Government of Liberia is committed to crowd in, support and create the enabling environment for the

private sector to drive the country's tourism industry.

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## **Back Lead**

### **Pres. Boakai Intervenes In UL Stalemate**

*-As Faculty And Staff Association Goes On Indefinite Strike*



*President Joseph N. Boakai*

*By Darlington Porkpa*

President Joseph Boakai has with immediate effect issued a formal directive to the Secretary of the Board of

Trustees and President of the University of Liberia for the convening of a Board meeting to formalize the establishment of a Search Committee tasked with identifying and selecting the new leadership of the University of Liberia, in strict adherence to the University's charter.

President Boakai has underscored the critical importance of expeditiously forming the committee to ensure seamless continuity and stability at the university.

The president's directive was made public after the University of Liberia Faculty and Staff Association (ULFASA) unanimously decided to embark on an indefinite strike action until a new President is appointed.

Following a mass meeting last week, ULFASA announced on June 14, 2024 the suspension of all classroom activities at the state-run-University of Liberia.

ULFASA cited unresolved issues such as delays in salary payments for part-time lecturers, substandard working and learning conditions, and the administration's failure to meet previously agreed-upon demands.

On top of their demands, ULFASA called for the resignation of UL President Dr. Julius Sarwolo Nelson and his administration, holding them responsible for poorly running the state run university.

“The current situation is untenable,” stated a representative from ULFASA during the assembly. “Our part-time lecturers have not received their salaries on time, the working and learning conditions are poor, and the administration has continuously failed to honor our agreements. We can no longer stand by while these issues persist,” ULFASA said during its assembly.

Meanwhile, ULFASA has issued a stringent to all lecturers to stay away from the university premises until otherwise order.

At the same time, ULFASA has unspecified action against any departments that will defy this directive.

“The administration’s neglect of our demands is unacceptable,” said another ULFASA member. “We are committed to providing quality education, but we cannot do so under these conditions. It is time for Dr. Nelson and his



administration to step down and make way for leadership that will prioritize the needs of both staff and students,” says ULFASA.

However, in an attempt to deescalate further confrontation that could grossly affect the learning activities at the University, President Boakai as visitor to the University has underscored the critical importance of expeditiously forming the committee to ensure seamless continuity and stability at the University.

This pivotal directive by the president, emphatically underscores the urgency and gravity of the matter.

The visitor to the university expressed his expectation of an unwavering commitment from the administration and the Board of Trustees and anticipates their swift and resolute action to address this vital issue, ensuring an efficient and transparent transition of leadership within the University of Liberia.

