

**Liberian Students Association
in Morocco
(LISAM)**



**L'Association des Etudiants
Libériens au Maroc
(LISAM)**

Motto: Unity, Cooperation and Strive for Educational Success

August 12, 2019

**Objective: Presentation of the plights of the Liberian Student Association in Morocco
(LISAM) to Minister of Education**

Today, it's an honor to present the plights of the Liberian Student Association in Morocco (LISAM) to the Hon. Minister of Education, Pr. Ansu Sonii. Firstly, we are grateful to our creator who has stood with us during our difficult times. We want to use this opportunity to extend our thanks and appreciation to the government of the Republic of Liberia for her tireless efforts in ensuring that we receive our allowances despite the financial crisis with which our beloved country (Liberia) is faced at the moment. It is indeed a golden opportunity for young and motivated Liberians to be given the chance to better prepare themselves for the future of Liberia and to contribute immensely to the growth and development of the Republic of Liberia.

However, in spite of this wonderful opportunity given to us the young people of Liberia, the government of the Republic of Liberia has not been meeting up with her obligations; which have had many negative effects on the lives and progress of the students in the kingdom of Morocco. We want to use this medium to present our plight to the government, again, through the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and development planning.

1. The constant delay of our allowances:

As we all are aware of the importance of the allowance to the progress of students, the general student body has seen the constant delay of the allowance as a serious obstacle to the students' progress. During the absence of the allowance, students have been displaced due to the lack of payment of rents. Their water line, current, and internet are constantly cut off due to delay of the payment of bills. Given this backdrop, students are not able to perform to the expectation of our government. It's impossible for us to perform without our allowance issue be addressed within due time.

2. Poor communication skills from the Ministry of Education, especially from the scholarship department:

Over the years, we have realized that one of the major factors contributing to the constant delay of our allowance and misunderstanding between the MOE and the general student body is the poor communication skills from the part of the MOE, especially the scholarship department. Normally, we start to engage the scholarship team two months before the actual deadline of allowance; unfortunately, the MOE has the constant habit of ignoring our messages.

We believe strongly that with a better, comprehensive and constant communication between the MOE and the students' leadership and the embassy, the MOE will be more proactive by ensuring that the documents of the students are moving timely in the system to MOFDP to help avoid the long delay and to ease the tension between the general student body and the Ministry of Education (MOE) concerning the issue of allowance and other relevant issues. Also, issues about students overstaying will be clearly understood before any negative action is taken on any student.

3. Ministry of Education (MOE) sending students back home without any warning or thorough investigation;

We are all aware that the slow academic performance of students is due to the failure of the government not meeting up with its obligations as was stated in the memorandum of understanding between the students and the Government of Liberia. We suggest that before any decision of such be taken, the student in question should be given warning in advance and there should be some sort of investigation as to why he/she is not doing well. Base upon such investigation, the Ministry of Education would get a clearer picture as to why there have been overstayed of some students. Normally, nobody wants to stay in Morocco forever. This is not our country. Living in Morocco is draining and challenging as a student. Everyone is making a progress (which might be slow or fast) to finish in due time. Also, we're anglophone students and coming into a francophone country to study is very stressful and challenging. Everyone doesn't have the same speed of learning language or adapting to different cultures but yet, we're trying our best to finish in due time. It's very hard to perform under hardship especially in country like Morocco where our programs are done in French. A full concentration is required in the absence of stress and depression and this can only be achieved when our allowances are sent on time. The allowances the Moroccan government provide are meant for feedings and not for the payment of rents, bills, transportation, buying of school materials and also not for students day to day activities.

4. Issue concerning the 54 new students

As we may all be aware, the government of Liberia sent 54 new students to the kingdom of Morocco to pursue their academic studies in different fields. Apartments were rented for the students to stay while undergoing their French studies. However, in spite of the government renting the students these apartments, the government failed to take the responsibility for the payment of bills (water, current, and internet). Also, some of the students were sent at the

dormitory and after their French year, they were asked to leave the dormitory for the sole purpose of renovating the dormitory for the next academic school years. Due to all of these, the students are faced with lot of challenges. The students can no longer take shower because their water line has been cut off. Also, the students are constantly sleeping in darkness because of the lack of current. Notwithstanding, those students who were asked to leave the dormitory are now stopping with some of their foreign friends. The allowances the Moroccan government provide the students are meant for feeding. The cost of living in Morocco is very high and to the extent that the new students cannot bear it without the presence of our allowances. They are currently done with the one-year French study which is mandatory for every anglophone student. However, these students will be dispatched to their various assigned cities around the country in September to start their actual studies. There's no money now for this movement because they will need to rent apartments, pay bills, buy school materials, feeding and taking care of themselves.

5. Need for students to do postgraduate study

Earning a master's degree helps you gain specialized knowledge to advance in your field. As the workforce evolves, a graduate degree shows you're dedicated to enhancing your country's expertise, agenda and credibility. You can focus on a particular field of study, which helps you become more competitive in your field. The benefits of a master's degree can also help you build on your current abilities, gain new skills, or even transition to an entirely new field. In certain industries, such as education or health care, graduate degrees offer mandatory training. Our country Liberia lacks many specialized citizens to fully meet up with some of the challenges our country is faced with and it's from this backdrop that we decided to pursue our master's degree that will better prepare us for the working environment and that will enable us to contribute more to our country rather than our country spending millions of dollars on experts.

6. The negative implication of the reduction of our allowances from 400usd-100usd

It is sad to learn that the Ministry of education wants to reduce student's allowance from 400usd to 100usd. Firstly, in 2011, with the consent of cabinet, the allowances were increased across the board after comprehensive assessments of students' living conditions in Morocco was done by Mr. Werner and his team. In their report after their assessment, they realized that the allowance that was provided by the Moroccan government was good but not enough to meet the needs of

students (rent, bills, feeding, transportation, school materials...etc.). What students were being given was set under Charles Taylor and seemed not to have considered the contextual differences in each host country. Hon Minister, the cost of living in Morocco is very high and 100usd is like the least price to rent a room. Imagine government sending students 100usd per month. What becomes of bills, feeding, transportation, school materials...etc.? Like we said early, an extensive assessment was done and this was how the government derived at the payment of 400usd and 450usd. We want to use this medium to ask the government to reconsider her decision because such decision isn't in the best interest of the students but rather harmful to the progress of students.

7. The importance of the Minister traveling to Morocco to do a self-evaluation and assessment

With all that has been said, we want to use this time to invite the Minister to Morocco to do a self-evaluation and assessment to get a clearer picture of the happenings in Morocco. We believe that with your visit to Morocco, it will enable you to make a better decision that will be in the best interest of both the students and government.

Hon. Minister, it's our prayers and hope that our petition be carefully considered.

May God bless LISAM!

Signed:
Liberian Student Association in Morocco (LISAM)