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*Nelson*

**UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION  
OFFICE OF THE LIBERIAN DELEGATION**

Hotel St. George, Brooklyn,  
New York, December 16, 1946.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Confirming the conversation which I had with you,  
I am forwarding, herewith attached, a copy of the memorandum  
submitted to Mr. Nelson A. Rockefeller.

We shall deeply appreciate any suggestions and  
assistance which you may be kind enough to give in this matter.

Believe me, dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Very truly yours,

*H. Lafayette Harmon*

H. Lafayette Harmon  
Member Liberian Delegation  
to the United Nations.

*Walter P. Reuther that I know  
I can do - Brown  
H. L. R.*

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
Delegate of the United States to the United Nations,  
New York, N.Y.

COPY

Hotel St. George, Brooklyn,  
New York, December 11, 1946.

MEMORANDUM submitted to Mr. Nelson A. Rockefeller,  
Representing Rockefeller Brothers of America, by  
the Representatives of the Republic of Liberia in  
NEW YORK.

With reference to the interview which you have been kind enough to give us, we think it well to have something in writing to leave with you after we have had a talk in the nature of an informal outline of our proposal and request; detailed plans will be submitted in the event you are interested in our approach for your financial assistance.

Liberia is a country that, perhaps many Americans do not know as much about as they should know, because like many great movements, the history of that country began quietly, indeed so quietly that few people know of the activities and heroic sacrifices of the men and women of African descent who laid the foundation upon which the Republic rest, have been protected, nurtured and developed for the past one hundred years as an independent Nation.

We realize, however, that the enviable state of financial independence to which some of the african dependencies and tropical colonies surrounding us, have arrived, has only been reached by strenuous eventful communal efforts on the part of the colonial administrators and the people, and by full recognition of the obvious fact, that Liberia can best be developed, its mineral and other resources utilized, and surplus Government funds hoped for, by the intelligent co-operation and assistance of the indigenous population.

The aim of this plan is therefore, a long term development of the human resources of Liberia. Objectively viewed, we are a Nation of both civilized and un-civilized, educated and un-educated Africans, the governing group representing about 10% of the population. As the country developed, we discovered that the colonial method pursued by those in our neighbouring colonies would result in the same kind of economic exploitation that has attended the diffusion over the tropical world, as such, 750 millions of human beings, subjects of the colonial world, have been deprived of direct participation in the UNO Assembly we are now holding in your City. As we raise our voices in the United Nations, we believe that our country will come more and more under the scrutiny of those elements of world opinion which maintain that, the negro is incapable of self-government. This opinion is not only erroneous, but it cannot be borne out by any tangible fact or circumstance; recent literacy test have shown that, mental ability is a function of cultural environment and not inherent in race. The governing class of Liberia has therefore become more and more interested in the development of our greatest asset, the enormous mass of our population which is still in the cultural stage of the early age.

It is our purpose here to present in rough outline a means by which we propose to develop the tremendous productive power that can be realized by raising our people to the level of modern culture.

With your assistance, the program would involve in its salient points, the following:-

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- 1.- The gradual acculturation of the tribes through agricultural and industrial education after settlement in groups of 1,000 families on approximately 8,000 acres of land. All operations would be mechanized as far as possible.
- 2.- Two generations perhaps will be required to accomplish the objective, and the financing would be planned accordingly.
- 3.- There would be no profit accruing for anybody except the profit accruing from increased purchasing power as a result of increased productivity.
- 4.- An initial capital of about \$2,400,000.00 will be required for each group of 1,000 families. Under proper management the entire investment with 3% interest beginning after the first 10 years can be liquidated in fifty or sixty years.
- 5.- The project would be under a Board of Control by the Government of Liberia, and the Unit which supply the capital would naturally be entitled to have reports and watch the development of the program from time to time as required.

The promulgation of such a program would tend to accomplish some definite and advantageous things; it would tend to still the criticism now emanating from certain groups interested in the advancement of coloured race in the country. It would begin to equalize the standard intellectually of the two cultural groups in Liberia and build toward making it a strong and productive Nation. It would prove to the United Nations and the world in general that, at the celebration of our first Centennial as an Independent Nation, Liberia is looking to the future as well as glorifying the past achievements.

The assistance which we are requesting of you, whilst it is an advance of funds which will be repaid after a period of years, is more in the nature of a philanthropic gesture for the present, at least, than a commercial loan of the money making class. It is one that you must look into distant years for the beneficial results aimed at. We wish you to be animated by the great principle which inspired the most illustrious benefactors of mankind. We desire that you solace this advance with the same prophetic faith that enabled the greatest of modern philosophers, amidst the neglect and contempt of their own time, to regard yourself as sowing the seed of truth for posterity and the care of Heaven.

As already mentioned in the first paragraph of this Memo., in the event you are at all interested in our approach for your financial aid, we are prepared to submit in due time, a detailed plan of operation for this program for your information and further consideration.

(sgd.) H. Laf. Harmon  
H. Lafayette Harmon,

(sgd.) C. Abayomi Cassell  
C. Abayomi Cassell,

Authorized Representatives of the  
Republic of Liberia at New York.