

**PROFILE OF**  
**H.E. AUGUSTINE KPEHE NGAFUAN**  
**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**Early Life and Education**

Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan is a respected Liberian professional, intellectual and political actor with several meritorious accolades to his credit. He was born in Monrovia on 7th April 1970 and hails from Fangonda Town, Kolahun District, Lofa County.

As a young student leader studying Accounting at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) in the 80's, he emerged as one of three students who topped the nationally administered West African Examinations Council's (WAEC) exams in 1989, earning a ***Merit Award for Academic Excellence***. He also graduated as *Valedictorian* of the Class of 1989 from the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), earning a diploma in Accounting.

Ngafuan earned a bachelor's degree in Accounting and Economics with the highest academic distinction (***summa cum laude***) from the University of Liberia in February 2000. While still a student at the University of Liberia, Ngafuan used his time to capacitate himself on multiple fronts. In 1998 he received a certificate in Democratic Leadership from the African Leadership Forum (ALF) founded by former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo. In 1999 he earned a Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) from the University of Sacramento, in California, USA. In 2002, while serving as a Banking Analyst at the Central Bank of Liberia, Ngafuan enrolled in the William E. Simon Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Rochester in New York, USA, where he earned a solid MBA in Finance and Accounting in June 2004.

**Political Life**

Ngafuan has been politically active since his days in high school. He served as Interim Student Leader of the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) in 1988 and was elected in

the same year as Vice President of the Student Government. In April 1998, Ngafuan was elected President of the University of Liberia Student (ULSU), a position he held until February 2000. Leading nearly ten thousand students at the Nation's highest institution of learning, an institution often dubbed "the microcosm of the Liberian society", Ngafuan not only promoted the interest of students, but also defended social justice, press freedom, inclusive democracy, and political liberties in the larger Liberian society.

As the 2005 Presidential and General Elections drew near, he organized and led the *Youths for Ellen Presidency (YEP)*, comprising thousands of young people nationwide who supported the presidential bid of Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.. While serving as Chairman of YEP, he also doubled as Spokesman of the Unity Party Campaign Team in the 2005 Elections. Again in 2011, he was a key figure in the Unity Party Campaign Team, which secured a second term for President Sirleaf.

### **Professional Career and Achievements:**

Beginning in 1988 with a six- month internship in the Accounts Division of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) as a requirement for earning a diploma in Accounting at the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), Honorable Ngafuan has had a distinguished professional career. During the 1997 Presidential and General Elections he served as *Senior Civic Education Officer* for Bong County with the Independent Elections Commission. His distinguished academic performance at the UL earned him an automatic employment with the Central Bank of Liberia, rising through the ranks from *Bank Examiner* to **Senior Banking Analyst** and finally *Head of International Banking*. In January 2006, he was appointed by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as *Budget Director* of the Republic of Liberia, - at the time the youngest member of Sirleaf's Cabinet. In August 2008 he was appointed *Minister of Finance*, a position he successfully held until February 2012 when he assumed his present position as *Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dean of the Cabinet*.

As Budget Director of Liberia, Ngafuan lifted the veil of secrecy around the Budget by making it a truly public document and brought much-needed transparency and predictability in the issuance of allotments

At the Ministry of Finance, Ngafuan spearheaded the expansion of the revenue base of the country from a little over US\$100 million to US\$500 million. Other notable achievements at the Ministry of Finance included the introduction of a scores of reforms including the crafting and passage of the much-touted Public Financial Management (PFM) Law, which clearly lays out the roles and responsibilities of major actors in public financial management and provides the legal basis for the introduction of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). He introduced the Direct Deposit System whereby employees and officials of the Liberian government are paid through direct credits to individual bank accounts at commercial banks, ending the age-old, fraud-prone and inconveniencing practice of issuing salary checks to government employees and officials. Ngafuan and his team automated business processes at the Ministry of Finance as way of enhancing efficiency and transparency, notable among these efforts were the introduction of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) for budget preparation and execution and the ASYCUDA software to aid revenue collection.

The introduction of Public Sector Accounting System (IPSAS) by the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance in 2009 was significant because it was the first time in Liberian history for accounting standards to be formally introduced across the Liberian Government. Perhaps the most towering of all of Ngafuan's achievements at the Ministry of Finance was his skillful leadership of the Liberian Government's efforts which culminated into the successful cancellation of nearly US\$5 billion external debt through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This remarkable feat, achieving debt cancellation by reaching the HIPC Completion Point, was achieved in record time, distinguishing Liberia as one of the fastest HIPC achievers.

As Finance Minister he simultaneously served as Liberia's Governor to the Boards of Governors of the IMF, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (ADB). Ngafuan chaired the ADB Constituency comprising Liberia, Ghana, Gambia, Sudan and

Sierra Leone from 2010 up to the end of his service as Minister of Finance. Hon. Ngafuan, in his capacity as Governor of Liberia at the African Development Bank (ADB), was one of three African Finance Ministers selected by ADB President Donald Kaberuka to participate and make the case for more resources for Africa in Consultative Meetings for the 12th Replenishment of Resources of the African Development Fund (AFD-12

He was elected Chair of the Board of Directors of the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) in 2010 and held the position until he made the transition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Minister. In 2006 Ngafuan was elected Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the University of Liberia, a position he currently holds.

In his current portfolio as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dean of the Liberian Cabinet, Ngafuan has led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in upping positive engagements with all friendly countries and peoples of the world, particularly with those nations having diplomatic representation near Monrovia. Through his remarkable foresight and diplomatic adeptness, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs successfully finalized several important bilateral agreements which, when brought to fruition, will significantly impact economic development in Liberia. The most significant agreements Honorable Ngafuan has negotiated and signed in furtherance of Government's Development Diplomacy agenda include the landmark US\$60 million agreement with the Chinese Government which will witness the construction of a modern Ministerial Complex intended to house about ten government ministries and agencies, and a US\$50 million dollar agreement with the Japanese Government for the expansion of the Somalia Drive to a four-lane, paved expressway. When completed, the Ministerial Complex will be the second largest Chinese office infrastructure in Africa, second only to African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Since Minister Ngafuan took over the helm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Liberia's bilateral relations have improved significantly, with several friendly nations opening embassies in Monrovia with resident accredited ambassadors. These include Great

Britain, Sweden, Brazil, the State of Qatar, etc. Ngafuan's adept diplomatic skills was one of the key factors in Liberia's re-establishment of full diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia and the consequent opening in 2015 of the Liberian Embassy in Riyadh headed by a fully accredited ambassador after nearly a decade of diplomatic disengagement. With guidance from the Chief Architect of Liberia's foreign policy, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Ngafuan has represented the President at high level Summits and conferences of ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations and a host of other fora.

Under the pursuit of economic/development diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Ngafuan's able leadership, has organized in conjunction with other government stakeholders a number of investment/business missions to Liberia for private sector actors from a number of Liberia's bilateral partners. These investment or business missions are translating to tangible investment outcomes in Liberia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also successfully concluded a number of political and economic cooperation frameworks with a number of countries and bilateral partners, notable among which are the US-Liberia Partnership Dialogue, Japan-Liberia Partnership Dialogue, and the EU-Liberia Political Dialogue.

Numerous bilateral cooperation framework agreements aimed at boosting ties between Liberia and friendly nations across the world in the areas of investment, trade, and commerce, education/capacity building, culture, agriculture and forestry, science and technology, and mining, etc have been concluded under his leadership. The Liberia-Nigeria Joint Commission, the Liberia-Indonesia Joint Commission, the Liberia-Turkey Cooperation Agreement, the Liberia-South Africa Joint Cooperation Agreement, and the Liberia-Georgia Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation are but few examples of the numerous frameworks agreements that are already and will continue to accrue mutually rewarding benefits for Liberia and its bilateral partners.

During the height of the Ebola crisis in 2014 when President Sirleaf and other key Government officials could not travel abroad, the responsibility of making Liberia's case

in international circles fell almost unilaterally on the shoulders of Minister Ngafuan. Whether it was at a conference of ECOWAS or the African Union; or at a debate at the UN Security Council or the UN General Assembly or in press interviews with CNN, BBC, VOA, etc, Ngafuan was forthright, passionate and eloquent in drawing the world's attention to the unfolding tragedy and drumming up international support and solidarity in not just eradicating the deadly Ebola virus but also ending the blanket stigmatization that its presence in Liberia and other West African countries engendered.

### **Awards**

Ngafuan is a proud recipient of scores of awards and certificates of achievement for excellence in his academic, professional, political and literary life. Among the scores of the academic awards he has to his credit include the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) **Merit Award for Academic Excellence** awarded in 1989 for being one of three students who topped the WAEC country-wide exams in 1989 and a **Certificate of Honor** in 2000 from the J.J. Roberts Educational Foundation for graduating *summa cum laude* (at the top of the graduating class) from the University of Liberia.. For demonstrating principled and courageous leadership as President of the University of Liberia Student Union (ULSU), Ngafuan was named by the *Inquirer Newspaper* in 1998 as *Student Activist of the Year*.

Honorable Ngafuan is one of Africa's poet laureates, having won the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize in an Africa-wide, yearlong *BBC Network Africa Poetry Competition in 2001* for his poem, "*The African Teacher*.". He received the **National Leadership Award** in 2010 from the National Excellence Award (NEA) Committee of Liberia. This award recognizes public and private citizens for distinguished service to community and nation; and in 2011, he was Winner of the **Public Service Award** from the National Excellence Award Committee. Ngafuan has been named **Minister of the Year** several times by several local media institutions since he became Minister of Government in 2008. . His exemplary leadership and passionate advocacy for his country and region during the Ebola crisis earned him a **Golden Image Award** at the 2015 edition of the Golden Image Award ceremony held annually as part of the celebration of Liberia's independence.

**Others**

Ngafuan is married to Mrs. Massa Konneh Ngafuan and the union is blessed with three children - two girls and one boy. He also loves sports, especially football, which he plays very well.

