From June 26 to July 1, 2017, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf paid a visit to Dallas, TX as special guest at the 2017 Mega Fest, noted as the world’s largest family-friendly festival, hosted by Bishop and First Lady T.D. Jakes of the Potter’s House and T.D. Jakes Ministries. **Cont’d on page 4**

On Friday, June 30, 2017, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf concluded her inspiring and memorable visit to Dallas, TX with a reception hosted in her honor by Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson of the 30th Congressional District of Texas. **Cont’d on page 9**
On July 26, 1847, 170 years ago, Liberia declared her independence, and became Africa’s first republic. Liberia’s declaration of independence in 1847 was spearheaded by Joseph Jenkins Roberts, born in Norfolk, VA, U.S.A., who was then Governor of the Commonwealth of Liberia, and became the first president of the new country. Liberia, which derives her name from “liberty,” meaning “land of the free,” was founded in 1822 by former slaves and free-born Blacks from the United States, under the auspices of the American Colonization Society (ACS). The ACS was a philanthropic organization chartered to find a new home in Africa for freed men and women of color from the United States. Among the founders of the ACS were many prominent early American leaders, including Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, Daniel Webster, Francis Scott Key, Henry Clay, and Bushrod Washington, an associate justice of the Supreme Court and nephew of George Washington. Liberia’s capital, Monrovia, is named after James Monroe, the fifth president of the U.S during whose administration the country was founded. The first Liberian Constitution was written at Harvard Law School. The country’s three branches of government, the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are modeled after the system of government of the U.S., and its national flag of red, white and blue bears close resemblance to the American flag.

Ten of Liberia’s past presidents, including Mr. Roberts, were American-born. It is in view of this historical linkage that there are places in Liberia named after states and cities in the U.S., such as Maryland, Virginia, Louisiana, New Georgia, Lexington, Greenville, among others. With a population estimated to be more than 4.1 million, Liberia is endowed with abundant natural resources, and is home to 43 percent of the remaining tropical rain forest in West Africa, with unique plant and animal species, including the pygmy hippopotamus. The country is a potential tourism haven with 350 miles coastline along the Atlantic Ocean lined with white sandy beaches, coconut and palm trees, as well as lakes, waterfalls, mountain ranges, and other natural attractions. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia and Africa’s first democratically elected female president, is the 24th president of the Republic of Liberia since independence.

On the occasion of the 170th independence anniversary of the Republic of Liberia, I, Jeff Gongoeer Dowana, Charge’ d’Affaires of the Embassy of Liberia in the U.S., and staff of the Embassy extend congratulations to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Government and People of Liberia.

Despite challenges, our country is, indeed, blessed, and we thank God for bringing us to where we are today. After years of bitter conflict and destruction, Liberia is on the move again, due to God’s blessing, and there’s no stopping us. It is important, as we celebrate the birth of our nation, to also reflect on its journey, from whence we have come as a nation and a people. Our nation must have peace in order to reconcile our differences and to develop our beloved country. As we prepare for Presidential and General Elections in Liberia in October, it is incumbent upon all Liberians to ensure a peaceful elections and a smooth democratic transition. May God Bless Liberia. Long live Liberia.
On May 18, 2017, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf met with Ambassadors and Charge’ d’Affaires of ECOWAS countries in Washington, D.C., on the first day of her visit to the United States. During their courtesy call on President Sirleaf, who was Chairperson of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government until June 4, 2017, the ECOWAS Envoys lauded the Liberian Leader for her stewardship, which has ensured continued peace, stability and progress in Liberia and the sub-region.

Speaking on behalf of the ECOWAS Ambassadors Group (EAG), Ambassador Daouba Diabate of Cote d’Ivoire, who was Acting Dean of the EAG, said President Sirleaf’s leadership has not only positively impacted Liberia but West Africa and the world at large.

Ambassador Diabate said besides her leadership role to ensure global peace and prosperity, President Sirleaf’s leadership of ECOWAS, especially recent actions that were taken to ensure peace and democracy in certain Member State, have enhanced the credibility of the regional body in the international community.

In remarks, President Sirleaf lauded the ECOWAS diplomats for the courtesy call, and used the opportunity to encourage them to continue to work together assertively as a regional bloc for the good of West Africa and the African Continent as a whole.

Earlier, the ECOWAS Envoys were introduced to President Sirleaf by the Charge’ d’Affaires of the Embassy of Liberia in the United States, Hon. Jeff Gongoer Dowana.
President Sirleaf Attends Mega Fest in Dallas

Held June 28 – July 1, the 2017 Mega Fest, which brought together an estimated 100,000 people, featured an all-star line-up of speakers and performers from around the world. Spirit-filled, empowering, and emotionally uplifting, the 2017 Mega Fest began Wednesday morning, June 28 with the “Women’s Economic Empowerment” Breakfast, which was attended by several thousands, mostly women. Serving as special guest speaker at the Women’s Economic Empowerment Breakfast, President Sirleaf challenged women worldwide to go after their dreams, stay focused and remain true to their God despite challenges they may encounter in their lives. In an interactive address moderated by Bishop T.D. Jakes, President Sirleaf said women must remain courageous and focused on their goals in the face of all their challenges. Amidst thunderous applauds and standing ovations, President Sirleaf noted: “Every woman has power. You must go after your dream.” She added that in times of crisis, women bring calmness, sensitivity and concentration in search for resolution.

President Sirleaf’s official delegation included the following: Rev. Sando Townsend, Religious Advisor to the President; Rev. Decontee Johnson, Associate Pastor, United Methodist Church of Liberia; and Rev. Foday Karpeh, Senior Pastor, Life Center Church.

Others members of the official delegation were Education Minister George Werner; Solicitor General of Liberia, Hon. Betty Lamin Blamo; Liberia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amb. Lewis Brown; Mayor of the City of Monrovia, Hon. Clara Doe Mvogo, former Legal Advisor to the President, Hon. Seward Cooper; Charge d’Affaires at the Embassy of Liberia in the US, Hon. Jeff Gongoor Dowana, Minister Counsellor for Press and Public Affairs at the Embassy of Liberia, Hon. Gabriel I.H. Williams; and Rev. Cecelia Harmon Rogers, Administrator at the Embassy of Liberia in the US.  

Cont’d on page 5
On the evening of Thursday, June 29, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and delegation attended one of the most important sessions of the Dallas 2017 Mega Fest. Bishop Jakes was the featured speaker during the evening session, an electrifying, spiritual-filled worship service attended by some tens of thousands of people who crowded the Kay Bailey Hutchinson Convention Center downtown Dallas.

Taking the stage after award-winning gospel music artist Tye Tribbett thrilled worshippers on their feet, Bishop Jakes delivered a soul-stirring message on the theme: “A Grip on Grace.” Bishop Jakes, a very eloquent speaker and prolific author, said anyone who cannot get a grip on what God has done for them will remain unfulfilled. He said God has blessings in store for everyone but individuals must get a grip on what they want. “Anything you don’t get a grip on you will lose,” he pointed out.

Bishop Jakes noted that in the face of success and possibilities, many people are unable to fulfill their dreams because they continue to hold on to the past and refuse to let go.

On 2 February 1856, Dallas was granted a town charter during the Regular session of the Sixth Texas Legislature. Samuel Pryor was elected the first mayor along with a constable, a treasurer-recorder, and six aldermen. By 1860, the town’s population reached 678, including 97 African Americans.
Among activities during her week-long visit to Dallas, TX on June 26 – July 1, 2017, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf visited the Dallas City Hall while the City Council was in session. She was received upon arrival at City Hall by Mayor Mike Rawlings.

During her visit to the newly-elected Dallas City Council, President Sirleaf was made an Honorary Citizen of Dallas by Mayor Rawlings, amid applause by the members of the City Council and the large number of people attending the session.

President Sirleaf also thanked the city leaders and citizens of Dallas for the hospitality accorded her, and said she looks forward to strong ties between Dallas and Liberia. She also used the occasion to introduce the Mayor of the City of Monrovia, Honorable Clara Doe Mvogo, and expressed her desire for future relationship with both cities.

A day before President Sirleaf’s visit to Dallas City Hall, Mayor Rawlings paid a courtesy call on her at her hotel. Mayor Rawlings, described President Sirleaf as a great role model on the world stage. **Cont’d on page 7**

April 24, 2017: The Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, the Honorable Joseph N. Boakai, Sr., visited the United States from April 13-19, 2017. Vice President Boakai’s visit was at the invitation of the City Council of Philadelphia, PA, Liberians and friends of Liberia. The visit, which took the Vice President to Philadelphia; Wilmington, DE; and Washington, D.C.; focused on creating awareness about Liberia’s education and business potentials, among others, as well as generating support for education and encouraging U.S. investment in Liberia. In Philadelphia, Vice President Boakai delivered the keynote address at the Liberian Educational Forum held at the Drexel University, focusing on the growth of quality education in Liberia. He also delivered a keynote address at the Liberian Business Forum, where he provided an overview of the state of the Liberian economy and investment possibilities in the country. Vice President Boakai said at the Business Forum that the Liberian government is focused on strategic investment, both domestic and foreign in value chain, plus downstream processed goods and in manufacturing. He added that the country also seeks to expand electricity distribution, as well as link creative financing for major small medium enterprises and commercially viable businesses.

The Liberian Educational Forum and the Liberian Business Forum were organized under the auspices of the Philadelphia Mayor’s Commission on African and Immigrant Affairs. The Vice President was accompanied at the various functions by Philadelphia Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, among other officials.
Mayor Rawlings noted that Dallas, which is the fourth largest market in the United States, looks forward to establishing strong ties with Liberia in economic and other areas.

He lauded President Sirleaf’s leadership of Liberia through challenges, including the Ebola epidemic, during which the President reached out to him after a Liberian with the disease died in Dallas, while a nurse treating that patient also contracted the disease.
President Sirleaf Visits Taxes Instruments Inc. in Dallas, Texas

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has called on Texas Instruments (TI), a leading global technology company, to afford young Liberians who are aspiring for a profession in technology to benefit from the company's training programs. President Sirleaf made the call on June 29, 2017, when she visited the headquarters of TI in Dallas Texas. Founded in 1930, Texas Instruments is a global Fortune 500 technology company.

During a meeting with TI executives, President Sirleaf indicated that as the company plans to expand its presence in Africa, Liberia is an ideal place for TI to establish an operating center. She added that Liberia is ideal because English is spoken in Liberia and many young Liberians returning home from surrounding countries speak fluent French, which is also widely spoken in the region.

President Sirleaf expressed the hope that young Liberian professionals in the areas of technology would be afforded the opportunity to benefit from TI’s internship and other training opportunities to better prepare them for quality service. She also noted that affording Liberians training opportunity and establishing a presence in Liberia would create a market for TI’s technology and products in the region.

The President also participated in a live interactive discussion on the TI Diversity Network (TIDN), the company’s television channel, in an auditorium crowded with employees and mostly interns.

Government of Liberia Holds Private Sector Business Forum in Washington

On January 11, 2017, the Government of Liberia, through the Embassy of Liberia in the U.S., hosted a business forum, intended to create awareness that Liberia is open for business. The “Liberian Private Sector Business Forum” was held on the margins of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue, which convened on January 10, 2017 at the State Department. Speaking at the opening of the business forum, the Foreign Minister of Liberia, Ambassador Marjon V. Kamara, who headed the high-level Liberian Government delegation to the U.S., said the purpose of the forum was to underscore that Liberia is ready for business. Officials of the Liberian Government who made presentation at the business forum included Finance and Development Planning Minister Boima Kamara, Agriculture Minister, Moses Zinnah, Commerce and Industry Minister Axel M. Addy, Public Works Minister W. Gyude Moore, and National Investment Commission Executive Director George G. Wisner.
The reception was attended by hundreds of distinguished guests who crowded the Congressional Office of Congresswoman Johnson located downtown Dallas. Those at the reception included Congresswoman Karen Bass of the 37th Congressional District of California and former Speaker of the California State Assembly; officers and members of sororities with which the President is a member or an affiliate, such as the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.; and the LINKS, an international, non-profit corporation whose members are professional women of color and are engaged in voluntary services.

Welcoming President Sirleaf to Dallas, Congresswoman Johnson, who has been in Congress since 1993, lauded Madam President for her exemplary leadership that has not only ensure sustainable peace in Liberia but that she has been a global champion for the cause of women. Responding, President Sirleaf thanked Congresswoman Johnson for the very warm reception and for the many years of friendship. She also reflected on the special historical relationship between Liberia and the US dating back from the founding of Liberia by African Americans in the 1800s.

As part of the highlights of the reception, President Sirleaf was given the Seal of Congressional Records by Congresswoman Johnson. In return, President Sirleaf also presented to Congresswoman Johnson, a large quilt hand-woven by Liberian women.

During the presentation of the quilt to Congresswoman Johnson, Liberia’s Deputy Chief of Protocol, Mrs. Ethel Toles, gave a brief history behind the use of hand-woven quilt as a presidential gift in Liberia. According to Mrs. Toles, the practice dates back to the 1800s during the era of Liberia’s first President Joseph Jenkins Roberts, who used quilts hand-woven by a group of women as gift.

On July 7, 2017 BBC Africa service reported a story about a former slave, Martha Ann Erskine Ricks of Liberia, who met with Great Britain’s Queen Victoria in Windsor Castle on Saturday, July 16, 1892, and presented the Queen a hand-woven quilt as a gift. Martha was born into slavery in 1817 in Tennessee, in the southern U.S. Her father George Erskine bought the family’s freedom and, in 1830, when Martha was 13, the family of nine moved to Liberia, founded in the early 1800s by freed men and women of color from the United States. According to the BBC report, it took Mrs. Martha Ann Erskine Ricks 50 years wanting to give her gift to Queen Victoria. In 1892 when talking to the Pall Mall Gazette, Mrs. Ricks said she admired the Queen because of her support for the anti-slavery movement. The tradition of giving quilts as a presidential gift was revived after President Sirleaf became president in 2006.
Welcoming Heads of State and Government and distinguished guests, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, outgoing Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority, said the people of Liberia were honored by their presence. She added that the event marked a turning point in the post-conflict recovery and reconstruction of Liberia.

Recounting some accomplishments since her assumption of the Chairmanship of ECOWAS Authority June 4, 2016. President Sirleaf said a four-point agenda was prioritized, with the main thrust on Consolidation of Democracy, Strengthening our Peace and Security Architecture; Improving Financial Stability and Promoting Institutional Reform, including the Review and Restructuring of the Community Institutions; Promoting Regional Integration through Agriculture; and Infrastructure Development.

Other distinguished guests at the summit included Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; Ms Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission; Mr. Moussa Faki, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to West Africa and Sahel. Since the convening of the 16th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now known as the African Union (AU), in 1979, Liberia has not hosted a summit of such magnitude, due to decades of civil unrest during which the war-ravaged country was regarded as a pariah nation.

Fact:
The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional organization of 15 West African countries established on 28 May 1975.
The Liberian Embassy Newsletter
Washington D. C., USA

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Liberia U. S. Sign Joint Statement at Partnership Dialogue

On January 10, 2017, the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue was held at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. The Foreign Minister of Liberia, Ambassador Marjon V. Kamara, headed the high-level Liberian delegation, while then Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs at the State Department, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, headed the official US delegation.

According to the Joint Statement concluding the day-long meetings, the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue convened four working groups focused on the following: Overcoming Challenges to Liberia’s Economy; Expanding Agriculture Production and Trade; Enhancing Liberia’s Investment and Infrastructure Climate; and Supporting Post Ebola Recovery and Health Strengthening Efforts.

“The United States and Liberia reviewed a number of successful collaborations in the transportation, water supply, energy, and information and communication technology sectors,” the Joint Statement notes.

Speaking at the close of the U.S.-Liberia Partnership Dialogue, Foreign Minister Kamara lauded the U.S. Government for the successful hosting of the third round of the Dialogue, and looked forward to “the retooling of U. S. support to meet key objectives identified during the

Amb. Konah Blackett Laid to Rest As Deputy Foreign Minister Shoniyi Consoles his Family

On Saturday, May 13, 2017, the remains of His Excellency Mr. Konah K. Blackett, Liberia’s Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the State of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, were laid to rest following funeral rites at the AME Zion Church in Charlotte, NC.

Ambassador Blackett died on March 28, 2017, at the St. Nicholas Hospital in Lagos, Nigeria, where he had sought medical attention since March 18, after falling ill while in transit to the State of Kuwait. He had just attended a two-day retreat for heads of Liberia’s 25 diplomatic and consular missions in Monrovia, Liberia from March 9 – 10, 2017.

The official Liberian delegation at the funeral, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Elias Shoniyi, included Hon. Jeff Gongoe Dowana, Charge’ d’Affaires at the Embassy of Liberia in Washington, D.C. The late Ambassador Blackett earlier served as Liberia’s Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Egypt from 2006 to 2010. Before then, he served as Charge’ d’Affaires /Chief of Mission of the Republic of Liberia to the U.S.A.
Q. What is the address and telephone Number of the Embassy???
A. The address of the Liberian Embassy in Washington D.C is 5201 16th Street N.W., Washington D.C., 20011. (202)723-0437

Q. How do I apply for a new Liberian Passport?
A. Apply online at www.Liberiapassports.com and follow instructions; apply in person at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. or the Liberian Consulate in New York.

Q. Why do I have to fly all the way to Washington, D.C. to complete my passport application process?
A. Because the equipment to collect the required biometric data is available only at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the Consulate in New York.

Q. What documents must accompany my application for a new passport?
A. An old Liberian passport, a Liberian birth certificate, or a certificate of citizenship/naturalization.

Q. Why is the Embassy of Liberia not renewing old Liberian passports?
A. Because the Government of Liberia has officially changed its passport to the new ECOWAS BIOMETRIC passport. Old passports are no longer renewable.

Q. How do I apply for a Visa to travel to Liberia?
A. Go to the Embassy’s website at www.liberianembassyus.org, click on the consulate tab. On the bottom of the page you will find the visa application with full instructions. Download it from there.

Q. What are the Requirements for Visa?
A. When you access the Embassy’s website and download a visa application, you will find all requirements attached.

Q. How long does it take for visa processing?
A. (10) business days.

Q. What must I do if I did not submit my application form with the proper prepaid trackable return envelope?
A. Mail a fully addressed trackable return envelope to the embassy. Then call the Embassy to look for your return envelope in the mail. If you will be traveling soon, then arrange an express pick up by one of the mail carriers: FEDEX, USPS, DHL, or UPS. You must call the Embassy to verify that your passport is ready before finalizing your pickup arrangement.

Q. Who is required to obtain Visa to travel to Liberia?
A. Passport holders of all foreign countries that are not members of ECOWAS are required to obtain Visa to enter Liberia.

Official Holidays of the United States and the Republic of Liberia—2017

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Holiday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Jan. 2, 2017</td>
<td>New Year’s Day</td>
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<td>Monday, Jan. 16, 2017</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr.</td>
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<td>Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017</td>
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<td>Wednesday, Mar. 8, 2017</td>
<td>Decoration Day (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Wednesday, March 15, 2017</td>
<td>J.J. Roberts’ birthday (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Friday, April 14, 2017</td>
<td>Fast &amp; Prayer Day (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 15, 2017</td>
<td>Unification Day (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Monday, May 29, 2017</td>
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<td>Tuesday, July 4, 2017</td>
<td>U.S. Independence Day</td>
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<td>Wednesday, July 26, 2017</td>
<td>Independence Day (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Thursday August 24, 2017</td>
<td>Flag Day (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Monday, Sept 4, 2017</td>
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<td>Monday, Oct. 9, 2017</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 2, 2017</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 29, 2017</td>
<td>W.V.S. Tubman Birthday (Liberia)</td>
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<td>Monday, Dec. 25, 2017</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
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President Sirleaf Meets With Liberian Community Leaders In Dallas